



PS3  
PlayStation 3

PSP  
PlayStation Portable

PlayStation 2



PlayStation Network

# PlayStation®

## Official Magazine - Australia

ISSUE 50 DECEMBER 2010  
100% Australian Content

# GRAN TURISMO 5

WE'VE  
PLAYED IT!

Will the world's most-wanted  
racer really be worth the wait?

50th ISSUE SPECIAL  
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EXPOSED

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12

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ZOMBIE BEARS?! RED DEAD REDEMPTION FACES AN UNDEAD INVASION!





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PS3

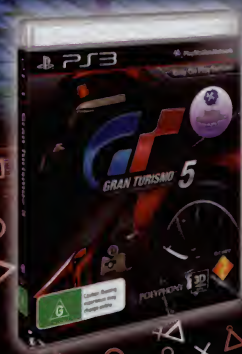
PlayStation 3





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SPRING 2010



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PlayStation 3



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"Gran Turismo is a **mutually rewarding experience**"



► COVER STORY

# Gran Turismo 5

**We've played it!**

Hundreds of cars. Dozens of tracks. A release date that slips more than grease on ice. We play it and find out just what to expect when the world's biggest driving game finally launches



## 50 The PlayStation Top 50

PlayStation turns 15, and we turn 50. In celebration, the *OPS* team nuts out the best 50 games you should play right now. The results are controversial



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One topic, two points of view. It's a great debate on the merits of the oldest mechanic in the RPG book: grinding

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We go to Treyarch and play the latest *Call of Duty* – in 3D!

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The Chimera are back and Hale's not here to stop them!

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Could this be the most heartfelt union in PlayStation history?

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We've played it, and in 3D. Is this going to be the best racer ever?



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This month, discover the Top 7 weapons to make in *Dead Rising 2*

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## Meet the team



**Paul Taylor**  
Deputy Editor

Transcribing interviews from a week and a half overseas. Or, rather, getting the interns to transcribe for me.

**Playing:** WRC  
**Wanting:** *Gran Turismo 5*



**Stephanie Goh**  
Art Director

Getting my arse kicked in a bout of *Tekken*. Button-mashers need to be weeded out of society. Who agrees?

**Playing:** *Castlevania: Lords of Shadow*  
**Wanting:** *Gran Turismo 5*



**Adam Mathew**  
Associate Editor

Feel'n free without my Tier 1 hobo beard. I did however find, like, six Burger Rings in there. They were delicious.

**Playing:** PocketStation  
**Wanting:** *Duke Nukem*



**James Cottee**  
Contributor

Playing through the classmate missions in *Valkyria Chronicles II*. Ridiculous subplots aplenty.

**Playing:** See above  
**Wanting:** *Monster Hunter*



**James Ellis**  
Contributor

I've been on the lam from a persistent, but bosomy, mall sales babe trying to hawk me salts from the Dead Sea.

**Playing:** *NBA 2K11*  
**Wanting:** *Gran Turismo 5*



**Nathan Lawrence**  
Contributor

Honestly, I have been unlearning the dark side of gaming on a deadline and relearning the fun.

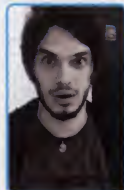
**Playing:** *Dead Rising 2*  
**Wanting:** *CoD: Black Ops*



**Dave Kozicki**  
Contributor

New Vegas has dragged me from *BFBC2*, which is a difficult task as I'm not prone to distractio... Hey, a puppy!

**Playing:** *Fallout: New Vegas*  
**Wanting:** *Brink*



**Toby McCasker**  
Contributor

*Final Fantasy XIII* came out in March and I haven't finished it yet. Why? My illegal backwoods hooch still, mostly.

**Playing:** *Final Fantasy XIII*  
**Wanting:** *Deus Ex: HR*



**Angry Sackboy**  
Contributor

The badboy in burlap has been busting heads over the *GT5* delay. We're feeling his pain. Literally. In our face.

**Playing:** *GT5 Prologue*  
**Wanting:** *Gran Turismo 5*

## Editorial



I tell myself I should never have picked up the phone. It's a childlike impulse, like if I hadn't answered the call everything would've been okay. Like if I ignored the problem it would go away. It wouldn't have, of course. It would've been worse actually. We would've reached the evening of our deadline sans our massive review of *Gran Turismo 5*, the excrement would've well and truly hit the cooling device and I would've absolutely missed my customary deadline cheeseburger.

I guess it was too much to ask that we'd be able to mark our special 50th issue with a review of the most-anticipated PS3 game yet. Unfortunately, thanks to *GT5*'s last-minute delay, it just didn't come to pass. But the gaming industry is nothing if not unpredictable.

It truly doesn't feel like 50 issues have passed since we sat down in our old location in Bondi Junction to put together the first issue of the magazine you're holding today. More than 5000 pages of content generated. More late nights than we can count. Many, many frequent flyer points accumulated. Hundreds of kebabs ingested. One nightmare office move to our new leafy, Surry Hills location.

It's been a fantastic four years and we're celebrating our 50th issue in style with a total overhaul. Welcome to the new *Official PlayStation Magazine - Australia*. We've given the magazine a slick new look and added a swag of fresh content. We hope you like it.

While our appearance may have changed, however, what's most important hasn't. A few old faces have bowed out and taken up other positions within the industry since issue #1 launched (and we've welcomed a few new ones) but, as always, we remain 100 per cent local.

The faces you see on this page aren't just shots of writers based in the UK to create the illusion of a large Aussie team – the staff and contributors you can see on the left are a large Aussie team. We don't fill our magazine with material you can already find in similarly-titled UK magazines. *OPS Australia* is completely independent and it's all written and designed here. *OPS Australia* supports the best local games journalists, we love the games industry down under and we respect every one of our loyal Aussie and Kiwi readers.

Thanks for reading and we'll see you at issue #100.

**Luke Reilly**  
Editor

**Playing:** *Dead Rising 2*  
**Wanting:** *Gran Turismo 5*

### SPEAK WITH US!

Love the mag? Hate the mag? We want your opinions and questions on *OPS*, on games – on anything that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins the Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:



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### SUBSCRIBE NOW!

Question: what is the gift that keeps on giving the whole year round? Love? Wrong. A scratch-and-sniff calendar of celebrity crotchets? No. Please stop abusing our rhetorical system.

The answer we were looking for is: an *OPS* subscription! Think about it, every issue – cheaper – delivered to your door via magic.

**TURN TO PAGE 34**

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Phill :: Markie :: Steady :: Jase ::  
Frewski :: Ness





Criterion Games

# WARNING

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People with relationships are advised against the playing of this game. Connecting to **NEED FOR SPEED™ AUTOLOG** enables extreme competition through precise documentation of friends' records and stats.

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Caution: Gaming experience may change online



Available on the App Store



# insider

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## PSP2: Closer than you think?

Developers already **putting PSP2 through its paces**

In an interview regarding the upcoming *Mortal Kombat* reboot, executive Producer Shaun Himmerick let slip the existence of a PSP2 development kit at NetherRealm Studios.

Asked by *IndustryGamers* about the possibility of a version of *Mortal Kombat* on the current PSP Himmerick replied:

"We're not launching day one on all consoles like that. We are looking at them; we have a PSP2 in the house and we're looking at the engine, like what can it support. Always a big thing for us is the performance... PSP2 looks like it's a pretty powerful machine."

It would seem that PSP2 development units have already been shipped out to studios the world over.

Apparently "leaked" tech specs, circulating online right now, hint that Sony's PSP2 will boast a variety of new features to help to differentiate it from Nintendo's incoming 3DS.

New features are alleged to be a touch screen (possibly on the underside of the device) plus two cameras (one on the front, one on the back) and 3G-connectivity (unlike PSPGo's Wi-Fi only).

It's also being claimed the PSP2 may have a four core Cell CPU (the PS3 uses eight). Like all claims so far, however, this remains a rumour. It's unlikely the PSP2 will have a physical disc drive.

Previous whispers have the PSP2 pegged for a 2011 launch but Sony is remaining schtum about it.

We know almost nothing about the PSP2 so far, but we do have a few ideas about what should make it the most desirable portable device on the market.

### 1 ► Second analogue nub

This is essential. There cannot be anything more crucial than this. Camera controls, proper shooters – think of the possibilities. With two analogue nubs the

3DS will not be able to match PSP2. Do it! Then let us rip our personal PSone and PS2 games to it (and download others for a few bucks) to play them on the move Bang – an instant catalogue of thousands of games.

### 2 ► Make it 3D

With 3D such a big focus for the PS3 it seems to make perfect sense for PSP2 to go 3D as well. Any windbag who bangs on about Sony "copying" the 3DS is an unlikely customer at any rate. If 3D is important to PS3 it should be important to PSP2.

### 3 ► Whack a phone in it

Smartphones are huge. Problem is, people will generally carry as little shit as possible. If they already have a smartphone they might be less inclined to carry around a second device. Make the PSP2 into a phone, or at least have the option for 3G service in some models.



Issue 50 December 2010

"PSP2 development units  
have already been shipped out  
to studios the world over"

FRAGILE  
HANDLE WITH CARE

TOP  
SECRET

## In Short

A brief look at this month's news



- ▶ **Gran Turismo 5** has suffered a surprise delay due to production issues and will miss its November 4 2010 release date by approximately four weeks. **pg 80**
- ▶ It's being reported at the time of going to print that Brisbane's **Krome Studios**, once one of Australia's largest videogame developers, will be shut down and all remaining staff have been let go. We'll uncover more on this story next issue.
- ▶ Disney Interactive has confirmed that **Pirates of the Caribbean: Armada of the Damned** has been sunk permanently and a number of Propaganda Games employees have been forced to walk the plank. Propaganda is still working on this December's *TRON: Evolution*.
- ▶ **Mafia II** has cursed its way into a Guinness World Record thanks to its 200+ uses of the word f—k.
- ▶ Codemasters wants to make **F1** an annual series, like *FIFA*, assuming it can continue to afford the highly expensive license.
- ▶ **Crazy Taxi** should be hitting PSN this November. Note, licensed music and products will not be present in this version. Sorry Offspring fans.
- ▶ Creator Hideki Kamiya has hinted at a sequel to his zany, sexy **Bayonetta**.
- ▶ The next **Uncharted 2** DLC is reported to be story-based.
- ▶ Word is the next game in the **Brothers in Arms** franchise will be called *Brothers in Arms: Savage Seven*.
- ▶ Sony has patented a backwards compatibility peripheral attachment for PS3.
- ▶ Serial trademark troll Tim Langdell, founder of **Edge Games** (a company that operates out of a PO Box and went 15 years between actually releasing a game) has been finally stripped of his collection of trademarks after a court found they were obtained by defrauding the USPTO. Langdell is notorious for aggressively pursuing anyone who simply uses the word 'edge' in a product.
- ▶ **OutRun Online Arcade** has been pulled from the PlayStation Network. Sega explained that the reason for the game's demise was "due to the expiry of the contract with Ferrari."
- ▶ Bon Jovi's upcoming Greatest Hits album will be released as **Rock Band 3** DLC. All *Rock Band 3* DLC will feature pro drums and pro keyboards. Tracks with pro guitar charts will be extra.
- ▶ Barack Obama will be playable in **NBA Jam**.
- ▶ A screenplay adaption of **Just Cause** had been optioned.
- ▶ Capcom has bought **Dead Rising 2** developer Blue Castle Games.
- ▶ **Enslaved** DLC will be a different experience and will feature Piggy as the playable character.
- ▶ EA Sports' Peter Moore believes the **FIFA** franchise will eventually become less-focused on disc-based releases and become more of a persistent online series.





► INTERVIEW

# 2010: The year of PS3

Sony Computer Entertainment Australia managing director **Michael Ephraim** chats to *OPS* about 2010, TV and *Time Crisis*

**OPS: 2010 has been a simply massive year for PlayStation: what's the feeling over at Sony Computer Entertainment Australia right now?**

**ME:** Well, PlayStation 3, as we've promised from the launch back in 2007, with firmware upgrades would just keep reinventing itself. When you look at what the PS3 can do now, in 2010, versus what it could do on launch in 2007 something like 70 per cent of those apps weren't around on launch. We're now starting to really get traction with the fact that PS3 is much more than just a gaming device.

Since launch we have launched PlayTV, which is the number one PVR in Australia, upgraded the device in many ways, but specifically 3D playback of games and movies, launched a video download store, catch-up TV, our music video streaming service VidZone has just got more and more busting with content.

So 2010 is really the year that everyone is starting to look at a PS3 but for the core gamers we've had a great run up from last year with *Uncharted* and then *God of War III* and then, the big one, *Gran Turismo 5* and then obviously third-party content as well.

So when people look at value for money, look at everything they want in the entertainment space in their lounge room, there's no other box on the market that really delivers what PS3 does. That's why 2010 is really becoming the year for PS3, because people are starting to understand it much better than last year.

**OPS: Well, speaking of GT, the last time you shipped a new GT title on a new PlayStation was GT3 - the series debut on PS2 - and you turned around about 14 million of them. What sort of impact are you expecting for GT5, with the hype that been building and building?**

**ME:** Well, GT has always brought the motoring crowd onto PlayStation. I'm not talking casual motoring enthusiasts - you know, hardcore professional motoring enthusiasts that are waiting for *Gran Turismo* to come out. That definitely expands our install base but in the past GT sort of did it single-handedly. If you add GT5 onto the conversation we just had about all this functionality which would totally appeal to the probably male, probably a bit more mature demographic for GT - all these new applications, PVR, 3D playback, movie service, on and on, would appeal to the new GT5 consumer who will buy a PS3. We're just getting a lot of momentum behind the GT5 launch and that will spur it along.

The big thing, obviously, is 3D. The anecdotal feedback we're getting from our shopping centre tours with our sister company Sony is that GT5 3D is stealing the show. So we've got momentum on the platform as a whole, PlayStation 3, we've got GT to bring in a much broader car enthusiast consumer and we've got GT5 3D functionality that will bring in the 3D enthusiast and we really believe that GT5 can have as much of an impact on 3D TV sales as the other TV content did earlier in the year.

**"People ask me, 'When's PlayStation 4 coming out?' Well..."**

**OPS: So you think a game like GT5, with the profile it has, is as significant a stepping-stone on the road to 3D as blockbuster films and sporting content?**

**ME:** The motoring enthusiast that will buy a PS3 now is the demographic who has disposable income and who is a key demographic to buy a 3D TV soon. All of these stars are lining up. We think, yeah, GT5 will be another reason for a consumer to say, "Yeah, okay, I need to get a 3D TV."

**OPS: On one of your other focuses this Christmas, what's the response been like so far to Move? Reader feedback via our Facebook page has been positive.**

**ME:** Move has been very strong, we will release



some numbers soon, but if you talk to retailers they will confirm what I'm saying. In the first four days and in the subsequent second week the phones have been ringing hot from retail about additional stock. Some stores are out of stock, we are replenishing as we go along and will have, we hope, ample stock for Christmas but the demand is very strong.

There are some great titles coming out for Move. As you know, *Time Crisis* will be coming out, and then obviously next year we've got *Killzone* and there are a lot of third party titles to still come out.

The exciting thing is that Move, as you mentioned, your readers, who are core gamers are very excited about Move as well because the application for Move is not only for social gaming, it's also for hardcore games.

Core gamers are very excited about it, unlike our competitor Kinect where the application for core gaming is still really missing and it seems to be appealing to just a mass market audience.

So Move is going strong, we think we'll only strengthen in time. I think our London office said we didn't expect huge numbers day one on Move because PS3 owners have so many applications on the PS3 that they can enjoy. We think the sales will just keep ramping up, especially with some key software titles that will be coming out in the next three months and into next year.

**OPS: We love PlayTV; at this point in time we really don't know how we got along without it for so many years. Did you have any idea how successful it would become?**

**ME:** Well, we waited to launch it because we wanted it to be able to record HD because, you know, Australia was a bit ahead of the curve really than Europe on HD. Europe had launched it with only recording SD. We knew that the PVR market was just starting to ramp up. We knew we had a winner on our hands but, as you know, we launched it on November 22 2008 if I'm not mistaken and in the first six weeks we definitely underestimated the demand. We probably could've sold another 20,000 to 30,000 units in just those six weeks. It has probably exceeded our expectations but we knew we had an application that is really relevant to the PS3 consumer who is a gamer but also interested in the broader entertainment offerings and to have a PVR, as you said, simple, easy-to-use, intuitive and reasonably-priced we knew that that would be an application that PS3 users would take to very strongly.

We've now done over 100,000 of them; it is the number one selling PVR on the marketplace, and it's definitely given consumers another reason to buy a PS3.

**OPS: It's funny because, when you break it down, when people are watching TV they're not playing games - but, on the other, hand the PS3 just remains so crucial. Whether they're playing games or watching TV, the PS3 is the critical element.**

**ME:** Yeah, really, when you look at, PlayStation 3 is a critical element for anything you do in front of the television, except subscription TV. You have a catch-up TV service, and we'll be launching more in the next few months, you have PVR, you've got 3D, you can play Blu-rays, you can download movies, you can stream music videos. I'm sure you've heard about Music Unlimited, which we will give you more details on very soon, that's a fantastic music, not music video, service that will just blow people away.

As I said before what we launched in 2007 and what you can do now looks like chalk and cheese. We can just keep upgrading the system.

People ask me, "When's PlayStation 4 coming out?" Well, you know, at this point in time you wouldn't think you would want to mess up a winning formula, which is delivering a box to consumers that you can genuinely put your hand on your heart and say it's pretty future-proof. So we don't even need to be talking about any new box because, as we said when we launched, we said PlayStation 3 will last for at least 10 years and beyond. I think consumers are starting to understand that.

**OPS: On consumers, is there anything you've found particularly unique about PlayStation owners down under compared to consumers overseas?**

**ME:** Well, as people always say, Australian consumers take to technology pretty quick, they're early adopters. There are probably more Australian owners of PS3 that enjoy the multifunctional aspect. In other countries where you have a big population, the UK could have just a gaming population of a couple of million. Here, being a small population, we've always marketed PS3s to everybody as a multimedia device that plays games as well.

Even if you look back on launch, we promoted PS3 as a Blu-ray player right on launch, which is not something the other territories did. But again, we were ahead of the curve on Blu-ray here as well.

The consumer here is open to enjoying new innovations on PS3.

**OPS: We've heard you're a bit of a *Time Crisis* aficionado...**

**ME:** I wouldn't say aficionado, I love it and when I'm in the arcades I'd say around 25 per cent of my money gets pumped into *Time Crisis*.

**OPS: So is that one of the Move titles you're looking forward to most?**

**ME:** Yeah, very much so. It's got so much heritage, to play it with Move just makes it even more accessible. There are quite a few, but *Time Crisis* is one of them. Obviously *Killzone* next year is just going to blow away gamers and bring in non-gamers into the first-person shooter genre,

and on top of that it's going to be 3D. But *Time Crisis*, love the game and can't wait to bring it home. I've got four boys at home so I'm sure we'll have a completely wasted weekend on *Time Crisis*.

**OPS: It's 15 years of PlayStation down under now. Can you choose a highlight?**

**ME:** I've been asked this so many times. When you look at PlayStation [one] and the revolution in gaming being disc-based and 3D, not 3D stereoscopic, but just 3D graphics. Then you go to PS2 where it was the cheapest DVD player and started introducing internet access, and then the launch of PS3. It has just been one amazing 15-year ride because every year we were given the opportunity to communicate to consumers, work with our business partners on such innovation. We're constantly ahead of the curve and to pick one is almost impossible.

**"Australian consumers take to technology pretty quick, they're early adopters"**

The launch of PSone was probably it, I would say, going all the back to the launch of PSone where a lot of people had doubted Sony's capability as a consumer electronics company to challenge the duopoly of Sega and Nintendo. I think the most satisfying thing was when PlayStation, at that time, was probably the biggest thing in entertainment full stop. The amount of units we sold, the buzz about it, you know, this is pre-globalisation of internet, pre-smart phones, pre a lot of things. Pre-digital content, pre-social media. PlayStation was the epitome of what's hot, what's now, what's must-have. That moment when PlayStation became the top three brand in the world - that was pretty exciting. We had planned this, we had talked about it, you know, we were coming from nowhere. We were confident, but obviously didn't know what the future would bring so the success of PlayStation [one] was very, very satisfying. ♪

### ► SONY FOUNDATION You can make a difference

You should have noticed a special yellow envelope inside your magazine this month - do not toss it away! This is *not* junk mail.

The Sony Foundation has just launched its new "You Can" campaign to raise awareness and, equally importantly, much-needed cash for youth cancer. In Australia, anyone under 15 years old is treated in a children's ward. When you turn 16 you are moved to general wards. Tragically, the survival rate can drop as much as 50 per cent between someone aged 15 years 10 months and someone aged 16.

The Sony Foundation has teamed up with a company who recycles mobile phone handsets. These handsets are collected, refurbished and sold as pre-owned in developing countries.

The Sony Foundation *isn't* asking for your cash, it's *just* asking for an old mobile phone. Everyone's got one hidden in a drawer somewhere. Fish it out, stick it in the pre-paid envelope and drop it in the post - it won't cost you a cent and you'll help the Sony Foundation raise the \$15M it needs to build six youth cancer centres across Australia.

Visit [youcan.org.au](http://youcan.org.au) for more details or if your envelope is missing.



# IN REALITY

## How far are we away from cloaking suits being real?

**As seen in:** Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Future Soldier, Metal Gear Solid, Aliens vs. Predator, Deus Ex: Human Revolution and many other games

A wise Australian sailor once said: "On Day One of World War III, there will be two types of warships: subs, and targets." The Chinese navy recently proved his point, by surfacing a sub right in the middle of a flabbergasted US flotilla. A glove slap to the Yanks, and a reminder that in this age of overwhelming offensive power, the only real defence is invisibility. Any target that can be seen can be destroyed. The trick, then, is not to be seen. But just how far can you take this premise – just how good can camouflage get?

Pretty good, as it turns out.

Allied air forces have been experimenting with active optical camouflage since WWII. Way back then it was discovered that, by spreading dim lights over the surface of an aircraft, it became possible to break up its sharp black outline and make it invisible against a night sky. America's new F-22 fighter takes that principle one step further, rendering it near invisible in broad daylight.

That may be fine for a vehicle 100s or 1000s of metres away, but what about someone right in front of you? The humble camouflage pattern has made great strides in recent years, with computer optimised digital splotches adopted by America, China, and other forward-thinking armed forces. These patterns have since proven to be 50 per cent more

effective than the jellybean ink-blob patterns of yesteryear but they still don't let soldiers literally vanish from sight, like Ron and Harry on a Ravenclaw panty raid.

Prototype invisibility suits exist, but they are cumbersome, and severely flawed. In theory, it's a simple matter to put a camera on one side of an object, and then project what it sees on to a special synthetic fabric on the other side. But the secret to creating the same effect in all directions, perfectly, through rain and dirt, and without a hint of distortion, is currently beyond the reach of our greatest trouser engineers.

In 2006, David Miller at Stanford University proved that perfect cloaking is impossible on casual grounds. There are too many problems with it. For the foreseeable future, Old Snake's Octo-cam is science fantasy.

At any rate, there's the heat. Even a sniper hidden in the finest, shaggiest yeti suit money can buy will still show up on infra-red, whether they're visible to the naked eye or not. While there have been recent advances in paints and fabrics that can throw FLIR scopes off the scent, there's still the soldier's gun. Fire off a few shots and it'll light up like Lucifer's love truncheon.

For now the invisible soldier is an impossible dream. Fortunately, this is not necessary to fight battles and win wars. Because in a contest where the person who gets off the first shot wins, you don't really need to be invisible. You just need to see him before he can see you.

### Now you see it

The potential of true invisibility has been a sci-fi staple for decades, and not just in videogames. In *A Scanner Darkly*, Philip K. Dick theorised that a 'Scramble Suit' would make scoring drugs a snap, and in *Hollow Man*, Paul Verhoeven saw invisibility as a sex offender's delight. But it took the mighty intellect of Major Alan "Dutch" Schaefer to outwit the cloaked Predator, by smearing his bulging pecs in mud to fool the space reptile's infra-red vision. Sometimes, low tech trumps high tech – and Armie trumps everything.



The Invisible Man. He has kids, but they're not much to look at

# NUMBER CRUNCHING

# 1.5 billion

# 6%

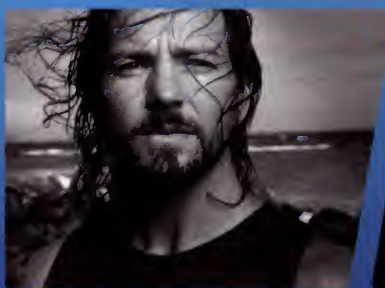
▲ The shockingly small percentage of US console owners that have downloaded extra content for their games.

▲ The number of soldiers all players of *Just Cause 2* have killed in the last six months.



## Separated at Birth!

**NO. 21** John Marston – Middle-aged man behind a revolver in a small town, Eddie Vedder



Being a man of surfing, peace and rock 'n roll we're not convinced the Pearl Jam frontman would be entirely comfortable fending off armed bandits and ornery cougars with a six-shooter. Still, the similarities are there for everyone to see. Rough beard, tangled hair, husky voice? Check, check and check. It's a spoiler, but do you want to know the biggest difference between these two? Eddie is still alive (ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-yeaaaaah, cue guitar solo).



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M

Violence & sexual references. Gaming experience may change online.



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# SO YOU WANT TO BE A ... FIGHTER PILOT?

## OPTION 1

Pilot selection for the RAAF is very competitive. We're reaching here, but we figure it's largely due to the fact that *Top Gun* makes everyone who watches it want to be a pilot. There comes a time in every man's life where you need to decide whether you're actually going to become a fighter jock or you're going to just keep wearing the Ray-Bans.

It's not easy. Not in the slightest.

You need to be an Australian citizen or, at the very least, a permanent resident. Men and women aged 17 to 43 can apply, but the RAAF prefers candidates under 27. There's also a saying: "The last fighter pilot has already been born." If you're reading this from the womb, choose a different career. With tech the way it heading pilots are on the way out. Fighters can go faster, turn harder and fight better without a fleshy human in it whose eyes explode under too many Gs. Fighter pilots are an endangered species.

Applicants must have completed Year 12 with passes in English, mathematics and two other academic subjects. Maths in Society doesn't count, either. They mean real maths. The hard crap. They don't want pelicans counting on their fingers when they're trying to work out the closing speed of the SAM about to give them an explosive enema.

There's more. You need to be able to think and act quickly and relevantly in emergency situations. You need to be able to perform complex cognitive tasks while carrying out precise manual activities. You need to be able to visualise the relationship of moving objects to each other in space, time and direction.

Oh, and you need to be between 163 and 193 centimetres tall and have an arse to knee length of less than 67 centimetres. That last one is important unless you're fine with leaving both your legs behind in the cockpit after they've been brutally sliced off during the ejection process.

## TIME:

13 weeks Officer Training School, two days at AvMed (aviation medicine) 52 hours of initial flight training, 34 weeks of subsequent training and, finally, operational conversion training to fly tactical jets or multi-engine aircraft.

## OPTION 2

Turn on Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2

## TIME:

60 seconds



## ► INTERVIEW

# EL SHADDAI: Ascension of the Metatron

**Sawaki Takeyasu**, director and character designer of *El Shaddai: Ascension of the Metatron*, spills some beans on this wacky Japanese action adventure



Just for your reference, this is actually a dude - as far as we're aware

**OPS:** Between yourself and Masato Kimura you can claim credit for *Devil May Cry*, *Okami* and *Viewtiful Joe*. That's a lot of instant credibility for the likes of *El Shaddai*. Do you think *El Shaddai* will resonate with your old fans (and new ones) as well as the likes of your past works?

**ST:** Yes, I do think so. Players will be constantly entertained by the actions on the screen but, at the same time, will be enjoy the simple functions of the gameplay.

**OPS:** Can you explain how you came to decide on the premise? We've never heard of the Book of Enoch, and the only reason we've heard of Metatron is because Alan Rickman played him in the 1999 comedy film *Dogma*. What drew you to this setting and story?

**ST:** It has been a collective thought process with many people at Ignition inputting and key personnel at our UK headquarters came up with the original idea of using the Book of Enoch as the theme for this game, and I recreated an original storyline based on the idea.

**OPS:** What's going on in the costume department? Is the main character wearing jeans under all that crazy curved armour?

**ST:** There is a very important setting for the design of Enoch, and I wanted to add impact to create Enoch's character design. I find the most important thing is to be impactful and noticeable. Being cool is not impactful enough.

**OPS:** What has influenced the illustrated look of your game?

**ST:** I would say it is coming from myself. Everyone talks about a great work of art after their times. In

our era, *El Shaddai* is a videogame but hopefully it will be considered to be a masterpiece by people in the ages to come. My only interest is to create the best entertainment experience.

**OPS:** What's been the biggest challenge so far in getting *El Shaddai* to this stage in development?

**ST:** We started from complete scratch. I had a hard time creating a great team, hiring the best people and physically setting the studio up.

**OPS:** What's your favourite thing about *El Shaddai* right now? What would you say to potential players to encourage them to give your game a look come 2011?

**ST:** My favourite thing about *El Shaddai* is the "comfortable, easy-to-see gaming visual", the "constantly changing gaming visual" and a "non-stopping gaming visual" concept of the game. All people will be drawn into this game, so please look forward to the launch. We are confident that the players will enjoy our seamless gameplay despite the wide variety of actions.

"Hopefully it will be considered to be a masterpiece by people in the ages to come"







► INFOCUS

# KILLZONE 3



**F**irst-person shooters and motion-controls sound like a match made in heaven but, most often, they go together like beer and chocolate. Tolerable, but both end up leaving a bad taste in your mouth.

The Move support in *Killzone 3*, however, is a completely different story. Aiming works as you'd expect. Point the Move controller around the screen and pull the trigger to fire. Moving around the centre of the screen changes the

location of your gun and moving to the sides will start to spin your character.

We reckon your aiming will improve when using PlayStation Move. Movement, admittedly, is a little trickier and turning your character around takes more time than it would with a standard stick. Still, the benefit of being able to run in one direction and fire at enemies off to the side without having to turn and run towards them is more handy than you may think.



## ► TOP TEN

# BELTING-EST melee weapons

Sometimes bullets feel just a little too impersonal, not to mention expensive. Who knows when that next ammo crate will appear? No, you should probably just *brain everybody*.



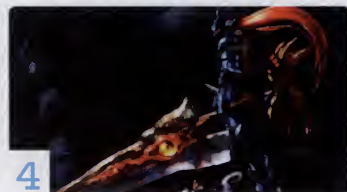
## 1 Blades of Chaos God of War series

The fundamental problem with melee weapons is range. Sure, you could bridge the gap by just throwing your swords at your attacker – but then you'd, sort of, have no swords left. The solution: chain those suckers to your wrists and flail them in the air like you just don't care. Downside: toilet trips could be dangerously problematic.



## 2 Dual lightsabers The Force Unleashed II

Not as clumsy or random as a blaster, the lightsaber is an elegant weapon from an age when horrific cauterisation was the height of civility. *The Force Unleashed II* does these laser swords justice by actually letting you lop limbs off.



## 4 Soul Edge Soulcalibur

A big-arsed zweihänder sword with an eye. Just think about how freaky that is. Copping evils from the chunk of metal that is impaling you would put any respectable swordsman off his game. Even still, this sword morphs to suit its users' tastes. Evil and convenient. That's rare.



## 3 Paddle saw Dead Rising 2

Speakin' out of line? That's a paddlin'. Trying to eat our brain? That's a paddlin'. Getting Chuck Green to MacGyver together a paddle with two chainsaws? You better believe THAT'S a paddlin'. You're never up shit creek with this.



## 5 Goldbrand Oblivion

There are plenty of great weapons in *Oblivion*, but for out-of-the-box weaponry there are few that are better than Goldbrand. It's only accessible after the player reaches level 20, and only possible to try for if you find a remote Daedric shrine way up in the mountains. Scoop it.



## 6 Impact Hammer Unreal Tournament 3

Running out of ammo is almost a good thing in this game. This badboy offers a bunch of offensive options; use it to slam enemies off cliffs, or even aim it at the ground for a rocket jump. This truly is the Swiss-army knife of head smashers.



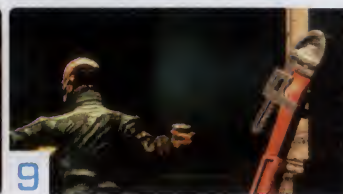
## 7 Crowbar The Orange Box

All right, the crowbar isn't the sexiest option out there. That said, there is an undeniable "Excalibur moment" every time Gordon Freeman finds 'old redy'. Besides, let's be perfectly blunt: in the land of the crate the crowbar carrier is king.



## 8 The mighty boot Duke Nukem series

In most modern shooters your melee button is just a lazily gun-butt. Back in the day protagonists were much more showy. Duke Nukem took the time to unleash a forward kick to his enemy's face (or crotch, depending on your aiming preferences). Rad.



## 9 Wrench BioShock

There's something extremely satisfying and ironic about taking an object that repairs things and using it to take somebody apart. Also, for best results we recommend belting enemies whilst humming the chorus to Foo Fighters' *'Monkey Wrench'*. So awesome.



## 10 Glass shard Manhunt

Simple enough to acquire, but holy crap on a stick this is brutal. Sneak up to an enemy and use the glass shard and wince as your character stabs, slices, and impales people on this chunk of window. Even more gruesome are the sound effects and the way that the main character wrenches the thing around. Disturbing.



# SPLATTERHOUSE™

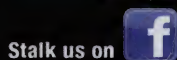


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and Gore



PlayStation  
Network



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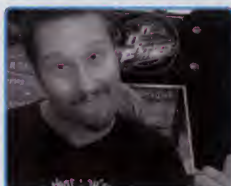




## ► IN YOUR FACE

# Can you get behind the grind?

Time-consuming chore or the best part of it all?



Dave Kozicki

## YES

You'd think Dave's monthly commitment to legitimately reviewing pornography would make RPG grinding impossible. It doesn't.

RPG enthusiasts and aficionados alike will always agree that traditional RPGs will always be about the grinding. In fact, I don't even use the term "grind" due to the negative connotations associated. I prefer to think of it as levelling up and I imagine plenty of role-playing pundits feel the same way.

When you initially traverse a vast world, say that in the recently released *DeathSpank*, you feel like an insignificant speck; a pimple on the face of an immense gaming arena. You should feel intimidated and most enemies should bat you away like a mosquito buzzing annoyingly about their ears. Is there a remedy to this ailment? But of course! The side quest.

Some might argue that they're mere padding. True RPG professionals see them as a golden opportunity. An opportunity to immerse oneself

further down the rabbit hole; to uncover the choicest bits of kit and attain the rank of near godhood as you take it to the next level. There is a certain amount of perverse satisfaction retracing your steps and finding yon beasties that previously had you for breakfast now cowering in terror as you disdainfully brush them aside.

While some might rush headlong into battle, trying to knock the main campaign out as quickly as possible, I find these so called distractions worthwhile. They enhance the immersion, leaving me to reap the rewards of a little extra effort. Practice makes perfect and by honing your skills and rising up the ranks you glean every morsel the developer intended you to and kick major arse while you're at it. It's a win-win situation.

Acceptable forms of grinding: the pepper variety that goes on top of the perfectly cooked steak; the female variety on a stage or dance floor.

That's about it.

And yet when it comes to role-playing games it is apparently an acceptable genre standard to have to put up with an epic amount of grinding. Grinding is, of course, the oft repeated tasks or objectives that the player must repeat to level up his or her character.

Take the not-so-long-ago release of *DeathSpank*. If one were so inclined, there are around eight hours of gameplay to be sucked from this PlayStation Network title – but I use the term 'gameplay' loosely. For the most part, *DeathSpank* requires you to stomp fiends from point A to B to collect the necessary experience and trundle all the way back again to complete your quest. Rinse and repeat until the end credits roll.

Perhaps it's the comparative shortness of the game when matched with your average lengthier retail RPG. Maybe it's the lack of a crucial connectedness with the character you're levelling up in a game that doesn't take itself seriously. Whatever it is, I feel that grinding has never been more noticeably tedious.

RPG purists may have a better chance of arguing that grinding works in a longer title, as part of a bigger picture, but *DeathSpank* highlighted how easily a supposed core component of the RPG genre can serve to artificially lengthen a game.



Nathan Lawrence

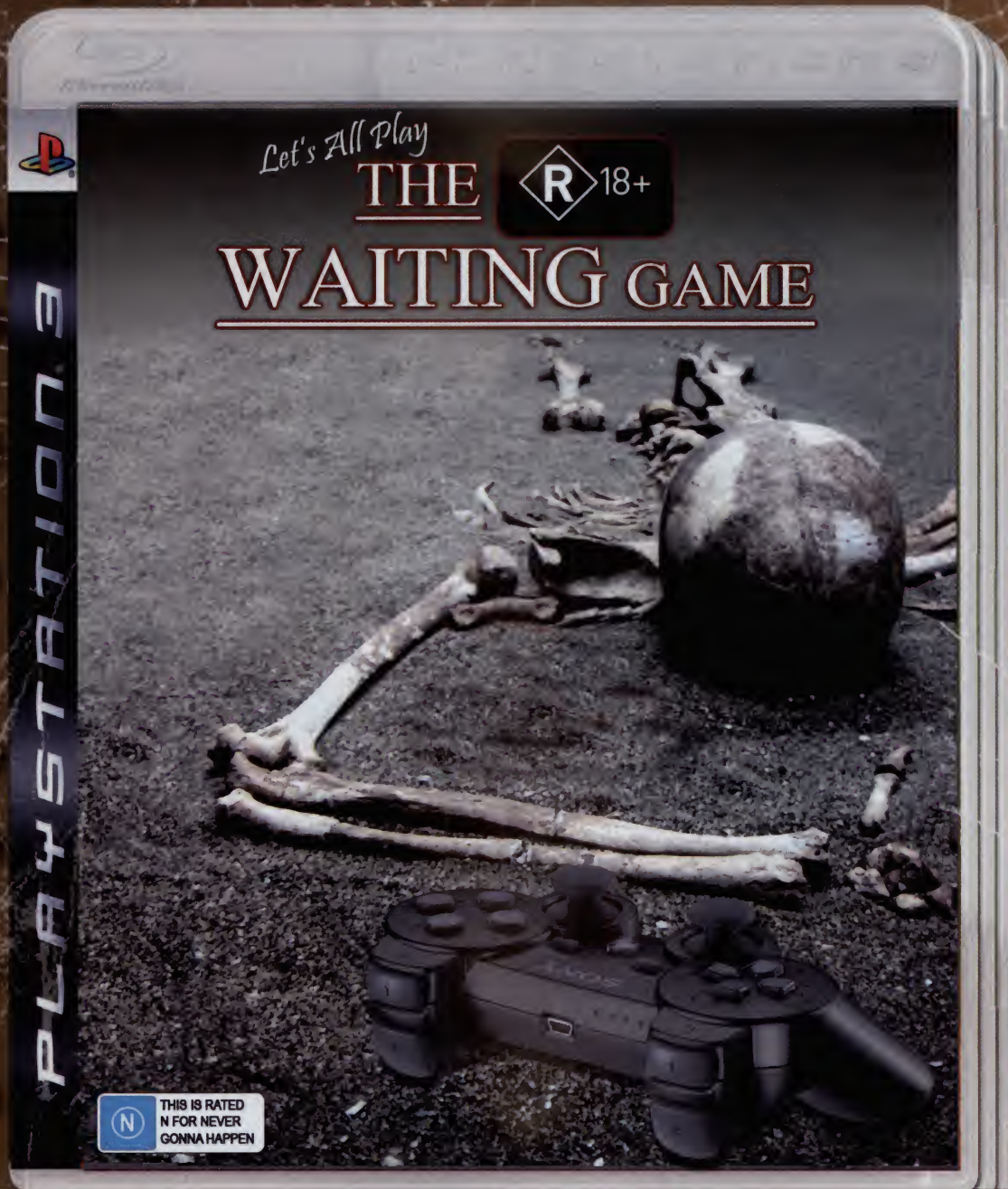
## NO

Nathan has the long, flowing locks of a man who eschews haircuts in favour of grind-filled gaming – but looks can be deceiving.

Want to hear more of the OPS team disagreeing with each other? Check out our Podcast available on side B of our cover disc. Want to get into a great debate with one of us, or a fellow reader? Hop onto [www.facebook.com/OPSAustralia](http://www.facebook.com/OPSAustralia) and make your case. The best topics may find their way into the magazine.



*You all **asked for it**, Australia!*  
 (But here's what we got you instead)



Can YOU master these  
*mind-bottling mini-games?*

- Bureaucracy run-around
  - Red tape hurdles
  - Heel-drag-racing
- the Navel Gaze-a-thon

#### EMPLOYEE REVIEWS:

- my tax dollars paid for THIS? I want a refund. *Mike*
- made me question democracy. Thanks. *Lucy*
- this manages to both suck AND blow. *Steve-o*





# Around the World in PS3

OPS trawls high and low for what's going on around the globe in gaming



## ▲ DEAD LYING

🇧🇷 **RIO, BRAZIL**

Google Street view, the service that lets us virtually walk around streets at a human-eye view to see exactly where the near Subway franchise is, had 'morgue' trouble than it counted on when it launched in Brazil. The new service revealed a number of corpses lying in the streets of Rio and Belo Horizonte, forcing Google to clean up the images and replace them with a picture of, y'know, just the street. Brazil has an intentional homicide rate roughly 20 times greater than Australia, and roughly five times that of the United States.



## ▲ THE DA VINCI BIRD

🇨🇦 **TORONTO, CANADA**

While Ezio used thermal draughts to keep Leonardo Da Vinci's flying machine in the air, Canadian engineering students have built a craft based on one of Da Vinci's designs where the pilot uses his body to flap the wings of the aircraft. Named 'The Snowbird', the pilot of this 42kg ornithopter pushes a bar backward and forward to flap the aircraft's wings. With a wing-span of 32 metres, The Snowbird has the same weight-to-wing span ratio of a Boeing 737. "We believe we are the first," said chief structural engineer Cameron Robertson.



## ▲ FLIGHT CONTROL

🇯🇵 **FUKUOKA, JAPAN**

This is begging to be made into a tower defence cum *Flight Control*-like game. A group of air traffic controllers in Japan allowed a group of highschool students to give instructions to pilots who were approaching the runway at Fukuoka Airport, in southern Japan. The staff gave the messages to the students who then read them out over the radio. Told to keep the experience to themselves, one of the teenagers told his schoolmates about it during a school talk. Since then Japan's transport ministry has punished the three controllers.



## ▲ GAMER-ITURE

🇺🇸 **WASHINGTON, USA**

Ever wanted to express your inner nerd around your house/cave/lair, but beyond your pre-order collectibles and limited edition box sets that sit collecting dust? Check out these amazing Pac-man bookcases and ottomans, *Tetris* piece couches, *Space Invaders* shower curtains, a desk in the shape of a controller and even a periodic *table*. It's time to show off your love and pride of all things game and science related, or at least sit on it. Go to [designcrave.com](http://designcrave.com) for more images of things that'll never make it to your nearest Ikea.



## ▲ A VERY FINE DAY

🇺🇸 **MICHIGAN, USA**

A recent law passed in Michigan will aid in enforcing harsher punishments and penalties for those involved in the sale of violent video games to minors. Retailers caught supplying will be charged \$5000 for a first event and up to \$40,000 for a repeat offender. Buying on behalf of a minor with intention to supply could land a perpetrator in jail for 93 days and/or a fine of \$15,000. In Australia, a sole trader can be fined \$5500 for selling an MA15+ game to someone under the age of 15. Companies can be fined up to \$11,000 for the same offence.

## INTERNATIONAL TOP 10 CHARTS

### 🇪🇺 EUROPE



- 1 **FIFA 11** EA
- 2 **Pro Evolution Soccer 2011** Konami
- 3 **F1 2010** Codemasters
- 4 **Dead Rising 2** Capcom
- 5 **Castlevania: Lords of Shadow** Konami
- 6 **Sports Champions** Sony
- 7 **Enslaved** Namco Bandai
- 8 **WRC** Black Bean
- 9 **Modern Warfare 2** Activision
- 10 **Red Dead Redemption** Rockstar

Source: [www.vgchartz.com](http://www.vgchartz.com)

### 🇯🇵 JAPAN



- 1 **Gekijouban Macross F** Namco Bandai
- 2 **Red Dead Redemption** Take-Two Interactive
- 3 **F1 2010** Codemasters
- 4 **Dead Rising 2** Capcom
- 5 **Ken to Mahou to Gakuen Mono. 3** Acquire
- 6 **Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.2** Ubisoft
- 7 **Modern Warfare 2** Activision
- 8 **Winning Post 7 2010** Koei
- 9 **Enslaved** Namco Bandai
- 10 **BioHazard 5** Capcom

### 🇺🇸 USA



- 1 **NBA 2K11** 2K
- 2 **Castlevania: Lords of Shadow** Konami
- 3 **FIFA Soccer 11** EA
- 4 **Dead Rising 2** Capcom
- 5 **Sports Champions** Sony
- 6 **Modern Warfare 2** Activision
- 7 **Madden NFL 11** EA
- 8 **Resistance 2** Sony
- 9 **Enslaved** Namco Bandai
- 10 **Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock** Activision

International publishers may differ from local ones



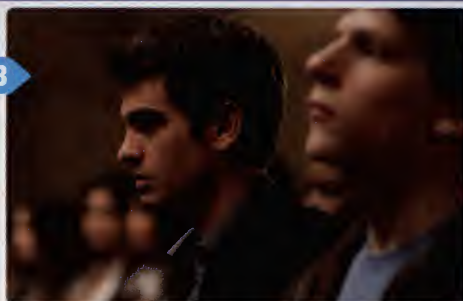
# THIS MONTH

Your 30-day planner of games and the good stuff!

Oct 28

## The Social Network

The movie about the guys who made Facebook and the incredible way it came together. Starring Jesse Eisenberg and Justin Timberlake, this is gripping stuff.



Nov 1-30



## Sin City: Crime and Corruption in 20th Century Sydney

This actually runs until May next year but if you're feeling overwhelmed by games this month, or just looking for something to do on a budget, \$8 will get you into this exhibition of Sydney's real underbelly at the Justice and Police Museum. Check out [hht.net.au/sincity](http://hht.net.au/sincity) for more info.

Nov 11-16



## Robin Williams: Weapons of Self Destruction

One of the funniest men on the planet performs for six nights at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. It's for over-18s only as he's bound to say some very naughty words - frankly we'd be disappointed if he didn't. Check out [robinwilliams.com](http://robinwilliams.com) for more info.

Nov 18



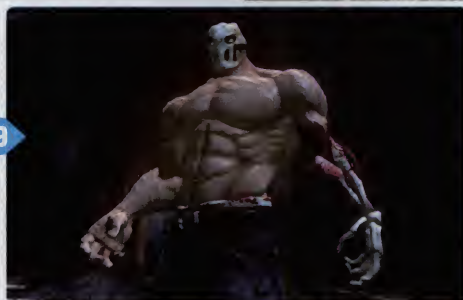
## Assassin's Creed Brotherhood

Another massive game for your PS3, the latest in the series expands Ezio's story as he recruits an army of assassins to leap from roof tops and fire arrows in the air. Should be a winner.

Nov 19

## Splatterhouse

This 21st Century remake of an infamous Megadrive title bursts onto the scene. Playing as a weedy dude whose girlfriend's been abducted by the forces of evil, you strap on a mysterious mask that grants you monstrous powers. It's very, very bloody.



Nov 25-29



## Australia vs England

The Ashes series kicks off at the Gabba on the 25th. Hopefully Ponting's out of his apparent slump and whacks the English silly.



Nov 13

## Philadelphia Grand Jury

This Aussie band shot to prominence with their track 'Going To The Casino' that appeared on *Underbelly*. They're more than a one hit wonder and are playing at the Metro Theatre in Sydney from 8pm. Check out [metrotheatre.com.au](http://metrotheatre.com.au) for more info.

Nov 27

## You Am I

Fronted by the charming Tim Rogers, the legendary Australian group are playing at The Hi-Fi in West End, Queensland. They've got more hits than there are weeks in the year so go and check 'em out.



Dec 5-15



## Muse

The English masters of dramatic scales and power ballads return again on a national tour. Cross your fingers and hope for tickets because the last time we checked they were going fast. Hit [ticketek.com.au](http://ticketek.com.au) for more info.

# Can't miss...

## Call of Duty: Black Ops NOVEMBER 9

The biggest shooter of the year lands today. Treyarch's latest takes us to Vietnam and beyond in what should be one of the must-play games of 2010 - check out page 36 for the latest info straight from Treyarch's LA studio.





# Release Schedule

Release dates, pre-order deals, new information and much more

## OUT NOW

### DJ Hero 2 **p72**

Genre: Music **Distributor:** Activision

### EA Sports MMA

Genre: Sports **Distributor:** EA

### Enslaved

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners

### Formula 1 2010

Genre: Racing **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners

### Fallout: New Vegas **p70**

Genre: Shooter/RPG **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners

### FIFA 11

Genre: Sports **Distributor:** EA

### The Fight: Lights Out **p79**

Genre: Fighting **Distributor:** Sony

### International Cricket 2010 **p81**

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners

### James Bond 007: Blood Stone

Genre: Sports **Distributor:** Activision

### Medal of Honor

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** EA  
The highly-anticipated reboot set a new franchise record, hitting the highest number of pre-sell units in the franchise's 11-year history.

### NBA 2K11 **p78**

Genre: Sports **Distributor:** 2K

### Pro Evolution Soccer 2011

Genre: Sports **Distributor:** Mindscape

### Rock Band 3

Genre: Music **Distributor:** EA

### The Shoot **p79**

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Sony

### Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Activision

### Vanquish **p78**

Genre: Action **Distributor:** SEGA

### WRC

Genre: Racing **Distributor:** AFA

### WWE SmackDown! vs. RAW 2011

Genre: Sports **Distributor:** THQ

## NOVEMBER 2010

### Call of Duty: Black Ops **p38**

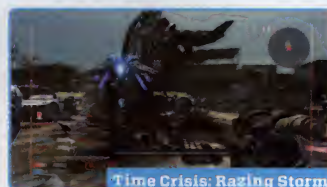
Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** Activision **Date:** November 9

### SAW II: Flesh & Blood **p77**

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Mindscape **Date:** November 11

### Time Crisis: Razing Storm **p73**

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** Sony **Date:** November 11



Time Crisis: Razing Storm

### Need for Speed Hot Pursuit

Genre: Racing **Distributor:** EA **Date:** November 18

### Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows

Genre: Action **Distributor:** EA **Date:** November 18

### Assassin's Creed Brotherhood

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Ubisoft **Date:** November 18

### Splatterhouse

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners **Date:** November 25

## TBC 2010

### Gran Turismo 5 **p60**

Genre: Racing **Distributor:** Sony

### NBA Jam

Genre: Sports **Distributor:** Sony **Date:** TBC

### TRON: Evolution

Genre: Action **Distributor:** THQ **Date:** TBC

## JANUARY 2011

### Dead Space 2

Genre: Action **Distributor:** EA **Date:** January 27

### Mass Effect 2

Genre: Action RPG **Distributor:** EA **Date:** TBC

## FEBRUARY 2011

### Bulletstorm

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** EA **Date:** February 24

### NASCAR 2011: The Game

Genre: Racing **Distributor:** Activision **Date:** TBC

"The NASCAR videogame fanbase has been underserved for a long time and we're bringing them something very special," **David Oxford, Activision**

## MARCH 2011

### Dragon Age II

Genre: Action RPG **Distributor:** EA **Date:** March 10

### Crysis 2

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** EA **Date:** March 24

### Final Fantasy XIV Online

Genre: RPG **Distributor:** Ubisoft **Date:** TBC

## APRIL 2011

### Test Drive Unlimited 2

Genre: Racing **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners **Date:** March 30

### Arcania: Gothic 4

Genre: RPG **Distributor:** AFA **Date:** TBC

## TBC 2011

### Agent

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Rockstar **Date:** TBC

### Alice: Madness Returns

Genre: Action **Distributor:** EA **Date:** TBC

### Batman: Arkham City

Genre: Action **Distributor:** Warner Bros. **Date:** TBC

### Bodycount

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners **Date:** TBC



Brink

### Brink

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** Ubisoft **Date:** TBC

### DC Universe Online

Genre: MMO **Distributor:** Sony **Date:** TBC

"DC Universe Online is the first game of its kind, and a truly massive undertaking - the first truly action-based MMO, the first MMO on the PlayStation 3, and the first time the entire DC Universe will be playable by the millions of fans who are eagerly anticipating its release. As the game heads into external beta testing, this extra time will allow us to address community feedback in a meaningful way." **John Smedley, President, Sony Online Entertainment**

### Deus Ex: Human Revolution **p48**

Genre: Shooter/RPG **Distributor:** Namco Bandai Partners **Date:** TBC

### Driver: San Francisco

Genre: Racing **Distributor:** Ubisoft **Date:** TBC

### Duke Nukem Forever

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** 2K **Date:** TBC

Did you know that in this game you can pick up poo from a dunny and toss it at a wall? You do now! Toilet humour.

### F.E.A.R. 3 **p44**

Genre: Shooter **Distributor:** Warner Bros. **Date:** TBC

### Fight Night Champion

Genre: Sports **Distributor:** EA **Date:** TBC

### ► Pre-order

## DRIVER: SAN FRANCISCO

Tanner's back. Take to the streets of San Francisco in the hunt for Jericho, your arch villain, in over 100 different cars. Using a unique 'shift' feature, *Driver: San Francisco* promises to be the ultimate car chase game, with the iconic city as your playground for action.

### Collector Pack includes:

- 1970 Dodge Challenger R/T model
- Map of San Francisco
- Two in-game vehicles

### EB GAMES \$108

Estimated dispatch date: TBA 2011

### GAME \$128

Estimated dispatch date: TBA 2011

Special Offer: Driver fuzzy dice





#### Homefront p42

**Genre:** Shooter **Distributor:** THQ  
**Date:** TBC

#### Hunted: The Demon's Forge

**Genre:** Action **Distributor:** Namco  
Bandai Partners **Date:** TBC

#### inFAMOUS 2

**Genre:** Action **Distributor:** Sony  
**Date:** TBC

#### L.A. Noire

**Genre:** Action **Distributor:** Rockstar  
**Date:** TBC

#### The Last Guardian p48

**Genre:** Adventure **Distributor:** Sony  
**Date:** TBC

#### The Lord of the Rings: War in the North

**Genre:** RPG **Distributor:**  
Warner Bros. **Date:** TBC

#### Marvel vs Capcom 3: Fate of Two Worlds

**Genre:** Fighting **Distributor:** THQ  
**Date:** TBC

Capcom's Christian Svensson is expecting extremely strong sales for *Marvel vs. Capcom 3* thanks to the fact that it "has been by far, our most requested sequel title in my tenure here at Capcom."

#### Max Payne 3

**Genre:** Action **Distributor:**  
Rockstar **Date:** TBC

#### Metal Gear Solid: Rising

**Genre:** Action **Distributor:**  
Mindscape **Date:** TBC

#### Michael Jackson: The Experience

**Genre:** Music **Distributor:** Ubisoft  
**Date:** TBC

#### Mortal Kombat

**Genre:** Fighting **Distributor:**  
Warner Bros. **Date:** TBC

#### NBA Elite 11

**Genre:** Sports **Distributor:** EA  
**Date:** TBC

Wedbush Morgan analyst Michael Pachter believes EA would lose 1.1 million sales due to *NBA Elite 11*'s recent delay and reduced the company's holiday quarter earnings estimate by US\$60 million.

#### Portal 2

**Genre:** Puzzle **Distributor:** EA  
**Date:** TBC

#### ► Pre-order

### SPLATTERHOUSE

Follow Rick and his mysterious Terror Mask as he unmercifully tears, cuts and beats his way through denizens of unearthly creatures in an epic adventure to rescue his girlfriend from the clutches of deranged occult figure Dr. West.

#### Preorder bonus, available at EB Games:

- *Splatterhouse* satchel, featuring an iconic stencil of Rick's Terror Mask

**EB GAMES \$98**

**Special offer:**  
Satchel  
Estimated dispatch  
date: 25/11/2010



#### Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One

**Genre:** Platformer **Distributor:** Sony  
**Date:** TBC

#### Red Faction: Armageddon

**Genre:** Action **Distributor:** THQ  
**Date:** TBC

#### Resistance 3 p40

**Genre:** Shooter **Distributor:** Sony  
**Date:** TBC

#### Spec Ops: The Line

**Genre:** Action **Distributor:** 2K  
**Date:** TBC

#### Street Fighter X Tekken

**Genre:** Fighting **Distributor:** THQ  
**Date:** TBC



#### Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon:

**Future Soldier**  
**Genre:** Action **Distributor:** Ubisoft  
**Date:** TBC

#### True Crime: Hong Kong

**Genre:** Action **Distributor:**  
Activision **Date:** TBC

Duke Nukem Forever

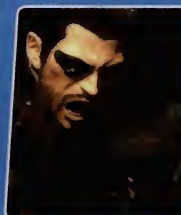
## In their WORDS

Industry chatter, inside tips and loose lips



"He's the official Ron Gilbert. Though he started out as vice Ron Gilbert, we want to make sure he works out."

Double Fine big wheel **Tim Schafer** on what role he gave friend and former LucasArts collaborator Ron Gilbert.



"Ask me in a decade."

Eidos Montreal's **Sebastien Bischoff** responding to our question 'what will *Human Revolution* be remembered for?'

"Bungie are a very unusual company... They're probably the last remaining high quality independent developer."

Activision boss **Bobby Kotick** dismisses Valve, Epic, Ninja Theory, Insomniac, Gearbox, Sucker Punch, Terminal Reality and more by giving Bungie the reach around to end all reach arounds.



"I look around Tokyo Games Show and everyone's making awful games,"

Tell us what you really think, **Keiji Inafune** - producer of *Dead Rising 2*.

#### ► Limited edition

### DRAGON BALL: RAGING BLAST 2

The popular *Dragon Ball Z* fighter returns with even more fast-paced, hard-hitting versus battle action! Feel the destructive power of your bone-crushing blows with tons of Super Attacks at your command, special effects that highlight the moment of impact and destructible environments that sustain massive damage as the battle progresses.

#### Limited Edition (JB HiFi only) includes:

- Laser cell artwork
- Eight downloadable costumes
- 3D Pop-up character art

**EB GAMES \$98**

**Special offer:** While stocks last, receive a copy of *Dragon Ball Z Remastered Movie Collection* (Uncut) V01 - *Dead Zone / World's Strongest* Double DVD  
Estimated dispatch date:  
4/11/2010

**JB HIFI \$99**

**Estimated dispatch date:**  
4/11/2010

**GAME \$94 (game only)**  
**Estimated dispatch date:** 4/11/2010  
(web only price, not available in store)







# BALLS OF STEEL

The third and final chapter in the epic saga of gaming's forgotten leading men

Gabe Logan was hardly surprised when he heard the news and he expected the pulse of the Forgotten Male Leads (FML) to remain at its usual comatose state.

Dan Carson, though, was having a heart attack.

He'd been ranting for a good five minutes about the sheer ridiculousness of it, how people's tastes were unfathomable.

How could a barbarian like Duke Nukem get a job? Logan finally cut him off.

"Dan, you're getting worked up when there's nothing to be bothered by. Nukem's found a new job with a new developer that has a great sense of humour and a reputation for getting things done. At the very least be grateful that he's leaving if he bothers you that much. Quit whining and man up. Shake his hand, hold your head high."

Carson hated to admit Logan was right. He reluctantly followed Logan out of his office to join the rest of the FML as they farewelled Nukem.

As they walked down the hallway Carson's head was racing. Despite his best efforts – he'd killed a traitorous President! He'd practically saved New York City single-handed in one of the most ridiculous plots ever conceived! – here he was, trapped in this hovel. And he knew it would be forever, stuck with other has-beens too generic (Ethan Cole), outclassed (Tom Hansen) or poorly animated (Will Grey) to deserve a sequel or HD re-release.

He could feel the panic rising, creeping from his gut to the back of his head.

At the end of the hallway Carson saw Jack "Black" Kellar talking as he shook hands with Nukem.

"...and I'm damn happy someone's got the guts to start making 'em like they used to."

The two of them laughed, and Duke turned when he saw Logan and Carson.

Still fuming, Carson stepped forward and stuck his hand out. Though his lips were smiling the rest of his face registered only

resentment and jealousy. He just couldn't help himself.

"Life's just one big revolving door for you, isn't it Nukem?" said Carson as he took the big man's hand.

Duke's eyebrows drew slightly closer behind his sunglasses, the cigar unwavering, as the handshake pulled him in closer.

"No amount of DLC or rambling from a hyped-up frat boy alters what you are: a joke. An unfortunate reject from decades-old design that missed being eradicated with dial-up internet."

The ash on the end of Duke's Gran Corona got longer and longer. He'd held

his silence for as long as possible.

"You're a nugget I pick out of my skidmarks, Carson," growled Duke, blowing smoke into Carson's face.

"You're less than that; you're a piece of corn in my stiff, shiny nine o'clock turd, and that face of yours is begging my left boot to go smack dab up your ass, shit-for-balls."

Carson's left cheek twitched slightly and before Nukem could follow through with his threat a car pulled up outside. It was Duke's limo. The horn honked the chorus to Joe Esposito's 'You're the Best'.

"But it seems like my ride's here. Outta my way, dirtbag."

Duke stepped outside the FML HQ and strode towards the car. Its back door flicked open to reveal the back seat packed with enthusiastic college girls. A single tear rolled down Carson's cheek when he realised most of them were only clad in lingerie.

Duke simply grinned before folding his giant frame through the rear door. "Hey baby. Look who's coming back to town!"

**"The ash on the end of Duke's Gran Corona got longer and longer"**



**OPINION**  
Paul Taylor

Paul Taylor has forgotten more videogame nobodies than most of us can remember. You can read parts one and two of the FML trilogy on our Facebook page.



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# WAR GAMES

EA has moved *Medal of Honor* into the modern era. It may make plenty of noise but does it have anything to say?

I've seen episodes of *Neighbours* that were less predictable. Another game another shitstorm. This time it's EA in the dock. The prosecution? Your bog standard horde of toilet licking, point-scoring politicians.

The game? *Medal of Honor*. Another death simulator, another way for kids to teach themselves how to shoot each other in the face – as good an excuse as any for Jack Thompson and his posse to stockpile pitchforks and have themselves a protest party.

The perennial games equal violence rhetoric is painfully repetitive but this time it has a twist. *Medal of Honor* is not set in Umjakistan, Chirag, or any other made-up country invented by a politically correct development team attempting to cover their arses. And it's not set during a war that finished over 60 years ago either.

No. *Medal of Honor* is set in Afghanistan and attempts to replicate a war that is still in progress, a war in which people on both sides are still dying.

And as much as I'd love to start launching urine filled water balloons in the general direction of the aforementioned point scoring politicians – this time round I have to admit that they may actually have a point.

I hate to be the party pooper here, but in a lot of ways *Medal of Honor* is actually quite an offensive video game.

But *Medal of Honor* is not offensive because it's a game about killing people. It's not even offensive because it's a game about war. It's offensive

because it's a game that squanders a valuable opportunity to say something truly meaningful about war.

Titles such as *Call of Duty: World at War*, and even the original *Medal of Honor*, are allowed to be the kind of game that EA's latest attempts to plagiarise. They're allowed to feature jingoism and ballistic pornography. They're allowed to be about making the bad guys explode and nothing more – because World War II is your quintessential 'good war'. There are the bad guys – Nazis – and the good guys – the Allies. It can be as simple as that.

But the conflict in Afghanistan is not your quintessential 'good war' – it's a war burdened by history and layered in ambiguity. It's a conflict that deserves a story with gravitas, and *Medal of Honor* was as good an opportunity as any for gaming to deliver that story – to create something more than another proverbial shooting gallery.

Instead we got a decent reworking of the *Modern Warfare* template, which works in context. Just not *this* context.

There's a reason why movies about World War II are like *Saving Private Ryan*. And, conversely, there's a reason why movies about Vietnam are like *Apocalypse Now*. A game about the conflict in Afghanistan almost has a responsibility to take war more seriously, to make its audience ask extremely difficult questions. *Medal of Honor* ignores that responsibility, or engages with it vaguely inbetween mission after mission of making everyone in a turban go boom.

Don't get us wrong: *Medal of Honor* is a good game – but it's undoubtedly a wasted opportunity. A game about the Afghanistan war, a very real conflict, needed an *Apocalypse Now*. It needed something less exploitative – something a little more substantial. We didn't get it, and that's a little disappointing. 🐸

**“*Medal of Honor* ignores that responsibility, or engages with it vaguely inbetween mission after mission of making everyone in a turban go boom”**



OPINION  
Mark Serrels

Mark Serrels is the editor of Kotaku.com.au. You can follow him on Twitter @Serrels. He doesn't like haggis but will eat porridge on request.



# UNLEASH THE RAGE WITHIN!

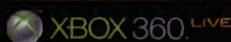
EXCLUSIVE  
ANIME  
INCLUDED

# DRAGON BALL RAGING BLAST 2

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# STORY TIME

Beware. If you're going to write there are plenty of ways to get it wrong

If you've ever got a free moment online, I strongly recommend tracking down the tutorial videos for *Acceptable.TV*, a doomed cable TV project built around zany, YouTube-style user-submitted content.

These short video guides on amateur filmmaking co-starred Dan Harmon and Jack Black and were bloody hilarious – but also highly instructive. Their crash course covered script-writing, lighting, sound, editing, and even motivation – but the first topic they discussed was story structure. If you don't have a story, you don't have a show.

It's a little different in the world of games, of course. Games don't always have a story – usually they don't even need one. Chess doesn't need a story. *Space Invaders* doesn't need a story. At one point I was convinced that *Riff: Everyday Shooter* had a gripping plot, but I later learned that there was a gas leak in my flat, and I was simply hallucinating.

So no, a game doesn't need to have a story (it doesn't need to be art, either, but that's a rant for another time). But if a game does have a tale to tell, then it better jolly well work. We all have an innate sense of what makes a good story, even if we can't put it into words. And if a story stinks, we can tell, even if we can't say exactly why. Another online tip: Red Letter Media. Its feature length *Star Wars* prequel reviews are to die for.


Take our good old pals Kane and Lynch. They've starred in two five-hour games now and

both of them had unsatisfactory conclusions. They sort of petered out into nothing. A good game, like a good movie, should finish on a high note. You walk out of the cinema (or your living room) into a world where the colours are brighter. A world where it's all going to be okay. If you're left thinking: 'Wait, it's over now? That's... that's IT?!', then the story-tellers have failed.

Other games will leave you with a resounding WTF?! I won't

spoil *Enslaved* for you, but not only was the ending a fizzer, it didn't even make sense. Then you've got games like *Darksiders*, which are, you know, okay, and have an arc and such, but leave you on a cliffhanger. Like \$110 and 25 hours of your life wasn't price enough.

But just what is a good story? A third search tip: 'The Hero's Journey'. In short: someone is thrust into a new situation, has to adapt to it, then face adversity and pay some sort of price, and ultimately return, kicking arse along the way. An example: to rescue his daughter, Col. John Matrix must escape from an airliner in flight, murder a succession of terrorists, and outwit an evil Australian in a string vest. It's not the one-liners that make *Commando* the equal of Hamlet. It's the pace, the progression, and ultimately, the closure.

We love classic movies because of their strong stories. If a video game aspires to be the next *Commando*, it must give us the same sort of satisfaction. 

**“If a game does have a tale to tell, then it better jolly well work”**



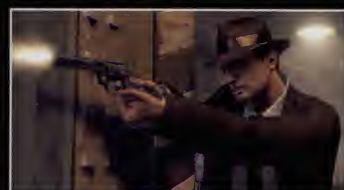


"ITS STORY IS SHARP, THE VOICE ACTING'S ACE AND THE GUNPLAY BALANCED."


- OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

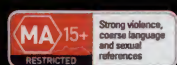


# MAFIA II



OUT NOW

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# inbox

Brought to you by EA



## ▼ LETTER OF THE MONTH

# WAR OF WORDS

**H**ey OPS,  
First I would like to say that you are doing a great job. I look forward to receiving your magazine every month.

This is the first time I'm writing to you. I've always wanted to but never really had something to write about. That was only until recently. Firstly I would like to say how much I enjoyed your article "Punch out time" because that hit the nail spot on! That is exactly what I wanted to talk about.

I had a long day at work and had been looking forward to getting home to play some online multiplayer. Now I was in a good mood when I started playing, but I can certainly not say that I was when I finished. Here I was, playing with people that were abusing the crap out of me. Now I wasn't cheating or anything like that. No, these people were just real sore losers, whinging if I was using power weapons and coming up with the silliest accusations. And their language was disgusting and very discriminating.

It was ruining my night. I was in a bad mood and realised that I started being short with my family around me, all because of these clowns. So I switched it off and left it for the night, but it has got me thinking. We, as gamers, always fire up when people

accuse us of being antisocial, angry and immature misfits. I have always been one for standing up against people accusing us for this saying that we are not immature and we play our games responsibly. But now I'm not so sure anymore. Don't get me wrong; I'm not labelling all gamers. But these people that I was playing with fitted that exact description. They are the reason why mainstream media has this view of us! Something has to be done. All of us responsible and mature gamers should stand together and do our bid to stamp this thing out once and for all! I don't know how but something has to be done.

**Marco Kappel**, via email

**Thanks for the props Marco, especially from Adam, who wrote that angry-man piece.**

**We reckon something has to be done about it, but anonymity is a difficult thing to counteract.**

**Recently Acti-Blizzard trialed a system in its forums where everybody had to use their actual identities. It was shouted down quicker than iSnack 2.0. So that's out.**

**What we really need are effective moderators on PSN who can monitor and boot the idiots. Preferably in the nuts. And from a 10 metre run-up.**



LETTER OF THE MONTH WINS A COPY OF:

## MEDAL OF HONOR

Congratulations mate. Maybe stick with the single-player!



Bad manners make this guy want to punch babies

## VENT YOUR SPLEEN

Dear OPS,

Reading your current issue (October 2010) I have read an opinion that blew me away, because it was exactly how I have thought and felt about the issue for a long time and finally, someone much more skilled in the art of literature has written it and got it published! Online gaming is shit. Plain and simple.

Why bother playing most games online when you know the guys and girls there before you have hundreds of hours experience over you before you get started?

For example, I only want to try the online options for a game because well, let's face it, I paid for it and I'm milking that puppy for all its worth. All you get is your arse kicked by some dickbag who has been playing it religiously for hours and hours on end. It's just not fun.

Take *Split/Second* for instance. Try playing that if you haven't a) completed the game to get one of the best three cars or b) a ridiculous level of knowledge on where every hazard on every track is with a completely rehearsed system you follow to get through the track. You'll fail terribly, which sucks because there are Trophies for your online rankings. Sure, the point of playing is to win, but how boring is it winning over the rest of the field by 20-30 seconds and never experiencing any of the brutality the game was designed to deliver?

I could go on about other games, but we all know the situation. The only form of online gaming that is any good anymore is, in my opinion, co-op with people you actually know!

So, I declare Adam Mathew my hero of the month. You sir, are an absolute champion! If I had T-shirts to give away, you would surely get one.

Thanks for listening guys, my venting is complete.

**Stuie Steele**, via email

**Wow. Given all the responses we're getting on this, we could just have the start of a movement here, people. Who else among you sticks to only co-op now? Conversely, who actually thinks being a dickbag is an evening well spent? Send us letters, we want to know.**

## Speak to us!

Love the mag? Hate the mag? We want your opinions and questions on OPS, on games – on anything that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins the Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:

OPS Feedback  
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## TAKE A CHANCE

Reading Abraham's letter in the October issue of OPS got me thinking.

There are a lot of horrible games out there that are being made and released based purely on a brand name. "Hey Jim, *Survivor* is! was popular. Let's see if we can get a game made for it to cash in on the people who still watch it!"

So they set the project up, put forward the idea and get the green light. "Survivor? That made mountains of money! Go ahead and make it!"

Obviously, being a game that is based on nothing but the name of the show, it turns out crap. Putting a bad mark on both the game developer and the franchise.

However, only a month before this hypothetical situation, an idea for a game was trashed because it was a new idea that hadn't been tested before.

"We don't know how well a survival game would work if you try and make it





"Heavy Raaain, you press ☹  
to call out Jason's name"

## "Many people are complaining that games have become **too soft and easy**"

realistic. Removing zombies/monsters/etc. and pitting the player against other humans instead who were all vying for the same 'goal' you are aiming for."

As a business the people running it didn't want to take a risk on a scary new idea like that. Why spend millions on something that might suck? "cough"

Wouldn't it be a good idea for the people who are making the adaptations to go through some ideas that have been cancelled due to risk to see what best fits what they want, rather than for them to attempt to create something from scratch that is almost guaranteed failure?

Who knows, they just might help create the game of the year that would have otherwise never been made.

**Michael George**, via email

**Removing zombies? Man, that's the last thing you should do. Zombies make everything better. That said, you'd be surprised by how many gamers buy crap.**

## TOUGH STUFF

Hey guys, love the magazine!

I just thought I'd write an email on the hot topic of gaming difficulty. Many people, myself included, are complaining that games have become too soft and easy to topple. The days (even weeks) it would take to finish a game have now dwindled down to hours, although how swept-up in the game you can become has only got better. *Heavy Rain* is a perfect example of this.

Games may be getting easier but how enthralled we are becoming is only getting better. We just have to take a step back and see just how far gaming has come in the past 20 years. How stories have become so much more in-depth, and how characters and choices you make can now make you think twice. Keep writing guys!

**David Black**, via email

**Well said. People are whingers.**

## Cuttings

### ► BRAKES ON

*Gran Turismo 5* officially sucks! So sick of it being delayed! It's quite frustrating!  
**Lexie Batman Taylor**  
via Facebook

Yep. It was quite frustrating having it happen four days before deadline too, after we'd promised you all the review.

### ► THE SPOILS OF WAR

I'm glad DICE spoiled us for choice in the *Medal of Honor* multiplayer. Four guns on four maps is the most fun I've had since *Haze*.  
**Matthew Bordignon**, via Facebook

**Ah, we see what you did there.**

### ► BEARD ENVY

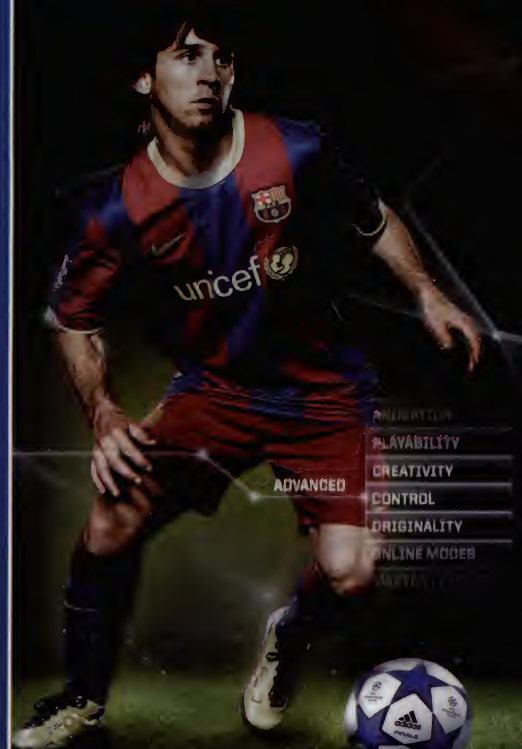
My beard was quite shameful on *Medal of Honor's* release. So I shaved it off.  
**Brad Wall**, via Facebook

**So did Adam.**

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**Borderlands.**

"Cheap as and funny as \$#!t. Critical, bitch!"



**Krystal Long**  
**Katamari Forever.**

"I bought it for myself, and laughing hard at the crazy stuff that didn't make ANY sense. I bought my mum a copy for \$23 at EB Games. She loved it to death like I did!"



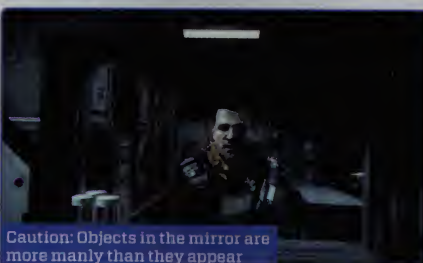
**Che Patterson**  
**Resident Evil 5**

"Bought it so I'd have something to say to the girl at the counter."



**Kurt Bannister**  
**Mafia II**

"I cant believe how well the atmosphere of the Gangster era has been recreated."



Caution: Objects in the mirror are more manly than they appear

## Caption This ►

We also accept 'craptions'. Have a go!

We've never seen a screen that tells you so little about the game it's from. Didn't stop **Jeremy Scott** from making it funny, though.



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## This Month

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## Call of Duty: Black Ops

3D! Zombies! Commies!

**L**et's be honest here. Many of the games we've seen in 3D so far haven't justified the tech they're made for. Sure, they've looked ok – proof of concept, the first tentative steps on the way to the future – but haven't provided many 'wow' moments.

They're either too dark, too choppy, or gut-churningly unrefined. However, *Black Ops* is none of these. It joins *Gran Turismo* as being a title that deserves to be played from start to finish with a pair of expensive specs on your face. It's *that* good.

It helps that the game looks astonishing whether it's in stereoscopic 3D or on a regular TV, and its features tease us with another 'must have' *Call of Duty*. You thought *Modern Warfare 2* was big? This is going to be absolutely massive. 3D is just showing off.

Our 90-minute demo and chat to studio head Mark Lamia and 3D producer Robert Sanchez proves that Treyarch has spent so much time and effort in honing and polishing this game, pushing themselves to create the best game they possibly could. Whole character models, entire

levels and weapons were either totally scrapped or tweaked until they were just right. This process was happening until a short time before our visit. These kinds of things set off alarm bells as we usually assume a studio is scrambling to get the game working before launch but this project is infused with the team's passion.

We went back into a level, titled WMD, that we saw a few months ago, and there were a bunch of new beats within it. It starts out as you're walking towards the SR-71, an atmosphere-scraping jet, before taking off and spying on troops below. Then your point of view switches down to the ground as part of a four-man squad, and zips back and forth between the two. You, in the SR-71, tell the troops where to go, and then you're on the ground eliminating an unavoidable platoon.

After your team makes its way past a few trucks and blows up a tanker you're then rappelling down a cliff face to breach into a satellite control room. It's this sequence that's both incredibly immersive and technically impressive, though not always at the same time.





## The Pitch

The hype of *Modern Warfare 2* with more outlandish weapons and a revised multiplayer scenario. Plus zombies.

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3

**GENRE:** SHOOTER

**EXPECTED RELEASE:**

NOVEMBER 9

**DISTRIBUTOR:**

ACTIVISION

**DEVELOPER:** TREYARCH

**PLAYERS:** 1-16

## What makes zombies so popular?

We asked Mark Lamia this question and his response was frank.

"I think gamers just love to blow the heads off zombies cause it's fun," said Lamia.

Fair enough. What are you going to do with the zombie mode in *Black Ops*?

"We designed this as a co-op experience, but you can play it solo, and it's designed so that every bullet counts; it's fast, it's frenetic. It's an action game but people come up with strategies, picking a certain weapon for a certain time. Then there's the whole zombie lore element. We did some crazy stuff with the story. For *World at War*, Nazi zombies that's the ultimate evil! It's hard to say it without a smile."

So what makes these zombies even more evil than Nazi zombies?

"Who says there aren't Nazi zombies in here? I didn't say there was, I didn't say there wasn't"

Damn. But what about their level of evilness?

"Zombies are f--king evil! Wicked! You have to kill them!

They're coming to kill you! We have retained the secret ingredients that we have for our gameplay. We're going to retain the core but we'll have some new stuff too... I always like to say 'Yes, we'll have zombies, and in 3D!'"

As Hudson, one of the ground troops, you latch your cable onto a rail and thrust your body over the ledge. You're then looking down at where you're going but your body is also visible. Since it's closer to the screen than the rocks you're rapidly descending down it feels like your character has an actual presence in the world.

Mark Lamia, Treyarch's studio head, explained that the 3D mode wasn't mandated by Activision, nor did Sony have any idea Treyarch were developing it – they only found out about it when Lamia felt it was in a shippable state. Treyarch's R&D department made this their side project while the bulk of the game was being produced, and Lamia insists that the game was not made with 3D in mind when they first started working on it.

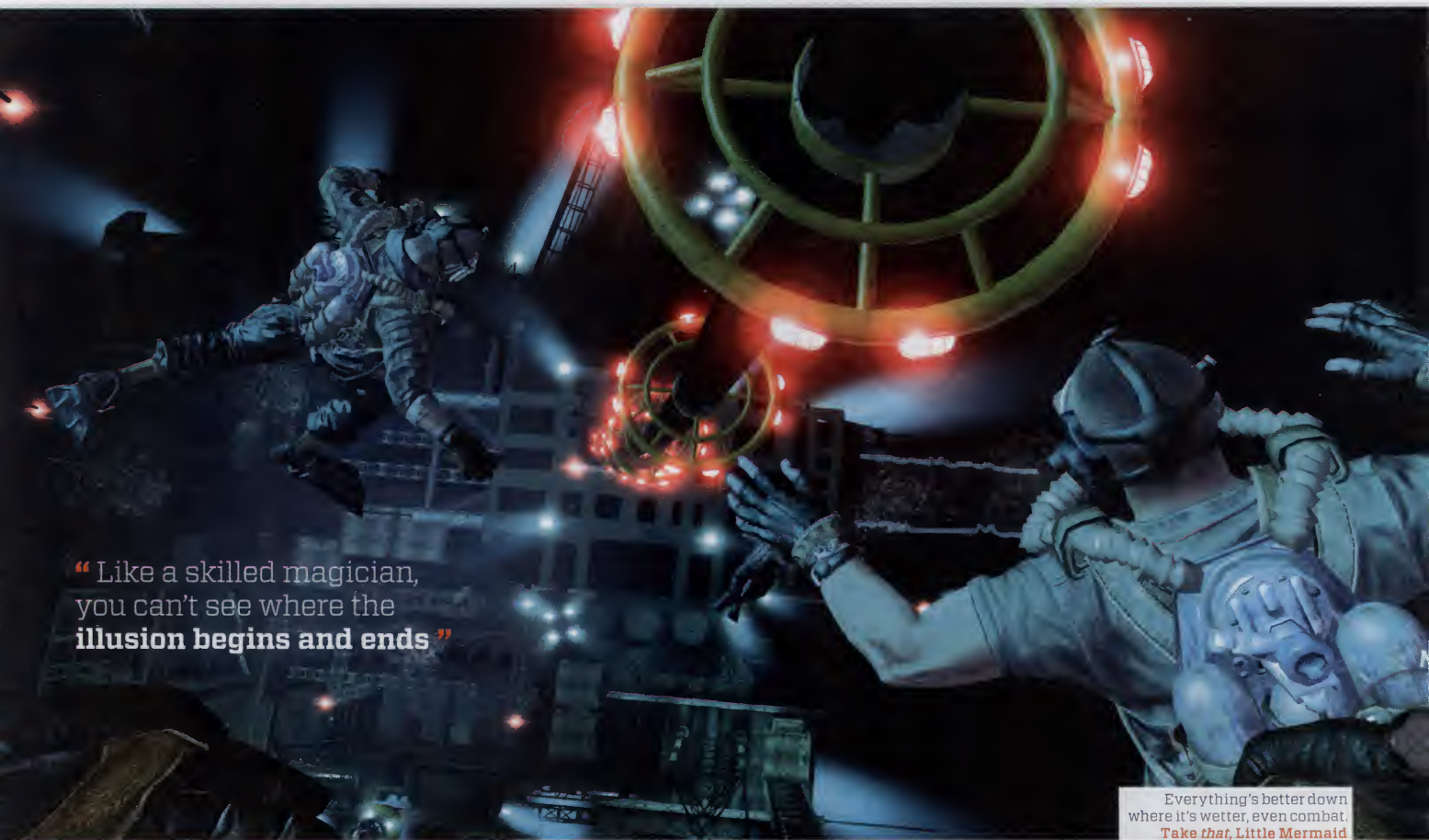
However, they found that it was a great fit for the game. After spending a lot of time working out if they could hit the perfect balance of performance and appearance, they did it. As we saw, the effect works. It's enthralling.

In the hands of an expert player, this is a cinematic game that we could watch for hours. ▶

We bet not one of these blokes has even bothered to **call the fire department**







"Like a skilled magician, you can't see where the illusion begins and ends"

Everything's better down where it's wetter, even combat. **Take that, Little Mermaid**



You'll participate in the **Battle of Khe Sanh** but Cold Chisel is nowhere to be seen



The multiplayer levels all feature a similar **Cold War-inspired** visual style

## They Say

"Aiming down the sights of your weapons, flying in helicopters, rappelling down mountains, and moving through highly detailed environments are just some of the awesome experiences you will have in 3D with *Black Ops*"

## We Say

This game is the best reason available so far to buy a 3D TV. Simple as that. Amazing.

## Verdict

BAD SHAPE  
NEEDS WORK  
GOT POTENTIAL  
LOOKING GOOD  
GREAT STUFF

**SURE-THING**

While Lamia was coy about just how fast the frame rate was, you can guess that's going to hover at about 30fps in 3D. In 2D you'll be powering on with a steady 60fps. Though we didn't get to simultaneously compare the game in its two guises, 3D performed admirably. It doesn't turn into a slideshow and as we take the controller in a multiplayer match and spin on the spot purposely trying to look for cracks such as screen tearing or slowdown, we find none.

The effect makes an SMG gun barrel pop out of the screen, and environments are full bodied. Rifle scopes turn everything flat again because, well, you're looking down the barrel with one eye closed. *Black Ops'* artwork works hard to enhance the effect however, like a skilled magician, you can't see where the illusion begins and ends.

The 3D mode is a standard feature across all versions of *Black Ops* – this isn't some special feature that you need to download, buy DLC to activate or pick up a special edition of to make it work. Since it's likely you don't have a 3D TV, the mode's there ready to use when you do. The whole game can be played this way, from the

single-player campaign, to multiplayer and last, but not least, Zombies.

Ah, yes, Zombies. Lamia and Sanchez were extraordinarily tight-lipped about revealing much here, except to say that the Zombies was going to be a co-op experience which could also be played solo. We're betting that Nazi zombies return along with their ideologically opposed communist zombies (see 'What makes zombies so popular?'). We. Can't. Wait.

There have been some 3D movies that we thought were a treat. *Toy Story 3* was one of them. *Despicable Me* less so, and *Avatar* was hit and miss. Without wanting to cloud the issue by comparing movies to games, the point is that films are the genesis or catalyst of 3D games and some 3D movies rely more on the 'gimmick' of 3D than they do by implementing a story and then wrapping the 3D around it. The focus for all visual entertainment shouldn't be the 3D itself; rather it should complement what is actually happening. Lamia knows this, and another reason why *Black Ops* is one of our most anticipated titles of 2010. **Paul Taylor**



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# Resistance 3

Way to enslave everybody, six-eyes

## The Pitch

Resistance one + Resistance two = Resistance threekin' awesome. Here ends the lesson.

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3

**GENRE:** SHOOTER

**EXPECTED RELEASE:**

2011

**DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY

**DEVELOPER:** INSOMNIAC

GAMES

**PLAYERS:** 1-TBC

Unfortunately Nathan Hale can't join us for this sequel due to a slight case of headshot. Apologies if you're still grieving over that fact, or if it is startling news to you, but there's really no way we can talk about this sequel without getting that obituary out of the way. Joe Capelli is now your go-to guy for all your protagonist needs and thankfully for everybody he's not the same disrespectful douchebag we all remember.

In the four years since Hale's blowhole installation Joe has grown-up, realised the futility of the military, abandoned his post and decided to do what most people would do when faced with an unstoppable six-eyed mutant invasion and the end of the world. Start a family. Okay, not what we'd be doing, but technically the Chimera are no longer co-opting humans for their conquering army. This prompts Joe to shack up in Oklahoma with Hale's step-sister, Susan, and have a son called Jack.

As you'd imagine, the plot doesn't then

play out like a sitcom where the Chimerans bemoan living next door to the ethnic minority humans by dropping hilariously scripted one-liners packed with latent racism. No, the mutants have total and utter genocide on their collective minds and, as that plays out, sickly Jack becomes the impetus for the discovery of a Chimeran anti-virus vaccine.

Thus begins a cross-country caravan of courage to distribute this war-changing miracle to the great unwashed.

Joining you on your mutant cock-blocking mission is Dr. Malikov, a self-described expert on Chimera and an individual who has spectacles and a goatee – so you just know he reads books and stuff. Though these two travellers have mismatched personalities and aren't the best of buddies they soon band together when faced with the horrors

of this new world. Much like that annoying mate who rides shotgun and messes with your car's air-conditioning, the mutants have decided to terraform Earth's temperature into the much colder climate they prefer. The change in environment has caused alien

plant life to blossom and formerly domesticated Chimeran animals, like Leapers and Grims, have gone feral. This is bad

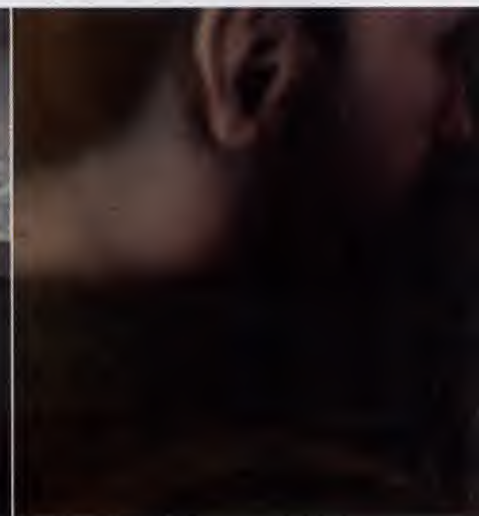
**“No longer will you be restricted to only two guns in your arsenal”**

news for any humans out there but great news for your trigger finger.

Speaking of which, the way you dole-out death has changed. It seems that firearm kleptomania has come full circle and is now back in fashion. No longer will you be restricted to only two guns in your arsenal and you can now customise your boomsticks with an inventive armoury mechanic. Returning weaponry consists of the updated classics like the Magnum, Marksman rifle and



A boat? This isn't the tug Joe was after





“The enemy AI is a helluva lot more believable than the previous two games”

My, you're big. Turns out **resistance** is futile after all, we guess

the Rossmore Shotgun along with some updated classics like the Bullseye and Auger. If you continue to blast fools with a certain gun it earns you currency and that can be used to pimp out your post-apocalyptic head popper with a bit of MacGyver know-how. Don't be surprised if some of your grenades turn out to be baked bean cans with nails in them.

You're gonna need Heinz in your corner too, because apparently the enemy AI is a helluva lot more believable than the previous two games. Hybrids will no longer open up with ninja aim the second they spot you, nor will they ignore you until you cross an invisible event line. These guys react like fallible organisms; you're even given the chance to hide after you attack an unsuspecting enemy. But if you stand in full view after the shot the confused creature will soon spot you and move into flank your tactless arse. The extra bad news is they have new traversal AI that means they can pour over any obstacle or through any window that you're spamming for cover. Your camping days are done.

And that's just the old enemies you'll have



Blondes. Good to have around in battle. **They have more guns**

## Now I'm SMRT!

It's not just the enemy intelligence that has been taken to school. Insomniac has gone to great lengths to ensure that a fight with NPC cohorts will feel as such, not just a solo fight with ineffectual hangers on. For example, it's pretty rad to hook up with some post-apocalyptic greasers in a firefight and watch one of them carefully unload an EMP grenade to weaken enemy shields while his mates nearby provide handy and intelligent covering fire.



Hey, er, Elvis? Thankyou. Thankyou very much

to deal with; *Resistance 3* introduces a new beastly that'll test your hand-eye coordination. The buggers in question are called Long Legs and though they may just look like Hybrids with legs that go all the way up, they're really gravity-defying, house-vaulting harbringers of doom. These guys are what the Bullseye had in mind with it's 'tag, fire-and-forget' tracer mode. It's sinking that first homing shot into their grotty epidermis that'll be the real challenge.

Luckily the act of engaging them will be made infinitely more manageable when you have a human buddy to use as a human shield. *Resistance 3* continues series tradition by providing, but this time the standalone eight player co-op mode has been ditched in favour of a two-person co-op experience. That's only disappointing if you look at it numerically, we have full confidence that Insomniac will craft a buddy experience that'll be something naturally integrated into the story and amazing as a result.

It's difficult not to get excited about this sequel. Will this be the closing chapter? And if so, how the hell is humanity going to turn a situation this bad around? Clearly mankind's big mutant defence strategy was written in crayon and about as well planned as teenage pregnancy. Can ex-corporal Capelli unscramble this many eggs?

Adam Mathew

## They Say

"The team has been hard at work over the last two years developing *Resistance 3*, and we're excited to have extra time to ensure that this game lives up to the expectations we've all got for it"

## We Say

This is looking damn good. We're hoping some closure though.

## Verdict

BAD SHAPE  
NEEDS WORK  
GOT POTENTIAL  
LOOKING GOOD  
**GREAT STUFF**  
SURE-THING



Get used to having him here.  
He's moving into your house



# Homefront

This homeboy ain't frontin'

## The Pitch

*Modern Warfare 2*, but in the future and with drones, tanks and helis.

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3

**GENRE:** SHOOTER

**EXPECTED RELEASE:**

EARLY 2011

**DISTRIBUTOR:** THQ

**DEVELOPER:** KAOS STUDIOS

**PLAYERS:** 1-32

It's too quiet in the 'burbs as our squad moves up to secure the cul de sac. Us jarheads take position behind picket fences and bullet ridden family sedans.

We vaguely notice that Kowalski has a Deagle out and is perched on the roof of a dog house. Before we can make a witty Snoopy reference the North Koreans spring their ambush and the neighbourhood fills with armoured drones and sizzling sniper fire. Recognising the need to purchase some serious backup, our eyes flick to the Battle Point balance and our finger pauses above the D-pad. What's the better choice here - to be alive and poor, or rich and dead?

This is the mortal conundrum you'll constantly face in *Homefront*'s multiplayer - is the tight-arse voice in your head correct in saying your position is indefensible, or should you invest in your own future by buying that rocket launcher? In an effort to differentiate the game from the rest of the pack, *Homefront* offers two game-changing features;

gadgetry - specifically, future-tech drones and vehicles - and an in-match currency system called Battle Points that metes out these toys to shrewd soldiers.

Existing separately to *Homefront*'s XP system, Battle Points is an element that lets you purchase on-the-fly strategic choices that can turn the tables in any firefight. 'BP' is earned by securing control points or ventilating enemies and, once you have Scrooged enough you can insta-buy equipment from the comfort and convenience of your very own D-pad. Hey there shopper, need to find out where your enemy is hiding but have an allergy to sniper bullets? Buy an air-drone and mark them out for your friends! Have you got line-of-sight on 10 enemies group-hugging in a backyard but are only armed with a pea-shooter? Make their day with an air-strike! Order in the next 15 seconds to get free set of bayonet steak knives.

You're getting the idea.

Whichever way you spend your 'battle pocket money' it's obvious that a match in *Homefront* will be both fast-paced and ever-changing.

"If you haven't been shot at in the first 10 seconds of spawning," says *Homefront* community manager Jeremy Greiner "you've been running in the wrong direction."

He's not kidding either. Once players in our match caught onto the mechanic, even the larger, 32-player maps began to feel like a barrel full of fish.

"We wanted the earning of Battle Points to escalate the battle naturally," Greiner tells us. "You may start with just infantry and drones but play well and you can eventually be running people over with tanks or hailing death down in a heli."

Speaking of vehicles, we were massively pleased with how they've being implemented into *Homefront*. Greiner is quick to point out that Kaos has done tonnes of useability testing to come up with a pick-up-and-play vehicle control scheme.

"Just as Battle Points lends itself well to a low barrier of entry to gamers, as a gamer who is primarily an 'infantry guy' I wanted to be able to jump straight into a tank, or a drone, or even a chopper without having to learn a new set of commands," he says.

It's sound game design. But what

## So what happens to Australia during the great North Korean expansion?

Throughout Indonesian and all those archipelagos there's a lot of annexation that goes on in the storyline. What happens to Australia in the end? Kaos can't really say for sure, but obviously this is a global event. The world is in financial strife, everybody is short on fuel - and the US gets crippled by an EMP blast. The *Homefront* universe is evolving and as this future-history continues to evolve Kaos says it has a lot more stories to tell. In their words? "No one is safe."



You just know at some point a commie tank will crush that swing

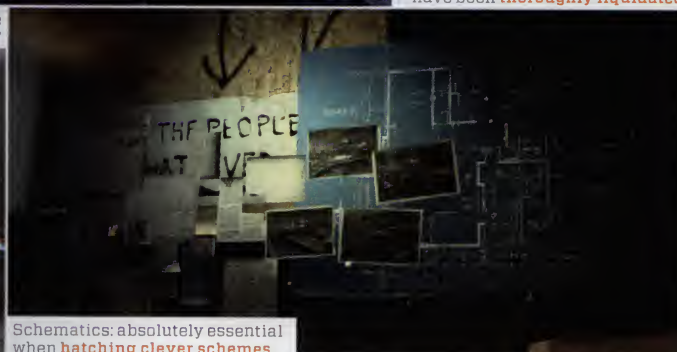




Looks like the Lumber Liquidators have been **thoroughly liquidated**



"Argh! **My eyes!** The goggles do nothing!"



Schematics: absolutely essential when **hatching clever schemes**

## "It's obvious that a match in *Homefront* will be both **fast-paced and ever-changing**"

impresses us more is the way you can spawn in any vehicle you can afford, *instantaneously*. Now if you haven't played any of the *Battlefield* games before that might not sound like such a big deal. To veterans, however, it means no more getting killed as you leg it to get a Humvee and no more watching the only chopper get crashed by some jerkface who has had six bourbons.

"What's even better about our vehicles is that I can instantly spawn into the side seat of any vehicle that's active on the battlefield," Greiner shows us. "Now the pilot can concentrate on flying, instead of landing to pick people up. And as a side-bonus, because the Battle Point price on a chopper is so high, there's a fair chance the pilot knows what he's d-"

We crash the chopper into a steeple before he can finish the sentence. In our defence, we needed one hand to drink our seventh bourbon.

Clearly effective teamwork can make or break you in Ground Control, one of *Homefront*'s capture-based modes. When it starts you have three objective points that need to be secured in any order you please. Securing or defending these points, along with killing enemies, will net you capture points, enough

points will win the round and push the battle to a completely new section of the battlefield. It's this sort of map evolution that makes a *Homefront* hoedown so unique and interesting. Brand new areas will require different strategies and sight-lines to consider.

We left our short stint with *Homefront* much, much more interested in it than we did going in. Given what we experienced hands on and the fact that these are guys who worked on the Desert Combat mod for *Battlefield 1942*, Kaos Studios' multiplayer pedigree is beyond reproach. *Homefront* won hearts and minds at TGS and, when the time comes for it to invade the online shooter space, it could well liberate us all from boredom. **Adam Mathew**



You can't fight on an **empty stomach**

## They Say

"*Homefront* isn't about going to war on the other side of the world or battling aliens from another planet; it's about fighting foreign invaders in your own backyard and defending your right to live"

## We Say

This is *Red Dawn* for the new generation and it's looking pretty bloody good.

## Verdict

BAD SHAPE  
NEEDS WORK  
GOT POTENTIAL  
**LOOKING GOOD**  
GREAT STUFF  
SURE-THING





Dude. You've got red on you. Just saying

# F.E.A.R. 3

Are you scared? You should be

## The Pitch

A pinch of *28 Days Later* with the desolation of *Children of Men*, wrapped in a *F.E.A.R.* skin

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3

**GENRE:** SHOOTER

**EXPECTED RELEASE:**

EARLY 2011

**DISTRIBUTOR:** WARNER

BROS. INTERACTIVE

ENTERTAINMENT

**DEVELOPER:** DAY ONE

STUDIOS

**PLAYERS:** 1-2

We're walking around Day One Studios in Chicago checking out its take on the horror/shooter franchise. We're nodding at the team of coders, artists and team leaders, appreciating the scattered mess of books on weaponry, topography and soldiers.

Each desk has a dev kit on it, and some staff-members have turned their corner of the office into a toy and movie museum – Angelina Jolie cheekily pouts at us in her *Tomb Raider* outfit from her cardboard cut out. The peace and quiet of the office is at odds with the creepy fright-fest Day One is cooking up.

This third part in the franchise is trying to balance delivering tense scenes as well as bona fide action. It's continuing the story

of the first two games whilst trying to give players something new to justify handing over their hard earned.

A sensible approach on paper. Day One Studios didn't make the first two games, though it did handle the console ports of Monolith's originals. *F.E.A.R. 3* is Day One's baby, utilising its own tech and ideas. If you were invested in the first two games we bet you're going to be interested in where the story and mechanics take you. However, you might be strained to feel connected to the *F.E.A.R.* universe if you've never played it before.

"It's not explicitly the same world you were in for the first two games," said the game's art director Heinz Schuller. "It's just another story that could come about from the incredible set of events that could occur."

The game's big hook is its 'generative scare' feature, meaning the game reacts to what you're doing and tries to trip you up, keeping itself fresh – in theory no two playthroughs should be the same. It's there in the little things like shadows flickering across a wall, to enemies that spawn in different locations. Add in a bunch of shrieking violins and firefights illuminated by torchlight you'd better make sure you're sitting on a brown couch.

We played through the 'Store' level,

weaving our way through offices, past stacking shelves, into a meat warehouse and through a hellish floor filled with flickering TV screens. One of the game's new enemies, the Cultists, were happy to unload their guns at us, throw knives and even strap bombs to their chests in order to drive us back.

We spoke to Schuller about where the

**"The game reacts to what you're doing and tries to trip you up, keeping itself fresh"**

team draws its influences from. Frankly, after his answer, we're too scared to check out his DVD collection.

"For me I look to movies like *Children of Men*, *28 Days Later*, to get the sense of what a mutated society would be like," said Schuller. "We wanted to highlight desperation in this society that's been lost in this horrible tragedy [that occurred in the original *F.E.A.R.*]."

"Things that are left [in the world] are even more horrible than could be imagined compared to a normal nuclear reaction, because at the same time all this psychic energy was released, driving these guys to worship and form a cult of insanity around Alma. We looked a lot of

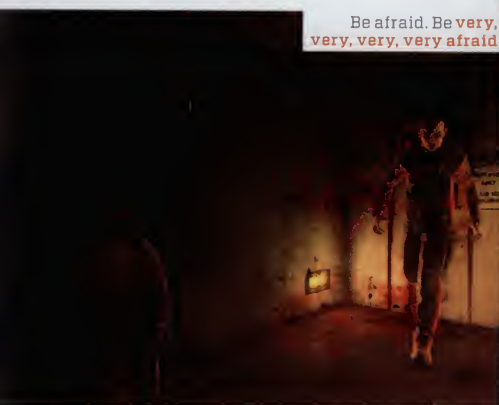


Item 18 on things that'll make you piss your pants



## Oh brother

In single player you take control of Point Man, a Special Forces type happy to nail supernatural beasts and folk that are causing a disturbance. Kind of like a Ghostbuster that takes out monsters with more teeth and claws than a large sack of angry Rottweilers. The problem for him is that his spectral mother, Alma, is pregnant and causing all sorts of dramas in the real world. His dead brother, Paxton Fettel, is back with a heartbeat and some wicked psychic powers of his own, and he's causing more headaches for Point Man.



Be afraid. Be **very, very, very, very** afraid

unrelated movies with similar feels.

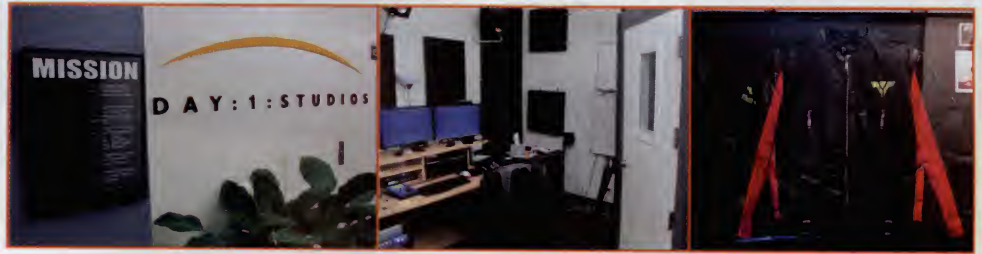
"There was a movie about a prison break in Sao Paulo called *Carandiru*. They had a good take on men gone mad and mob mentality. We wanted the feel of desperate society driven beyond sanity that manifested itself in the Cultists who are very visual: they do graffiti in blood and these horrible iconic themes about Alma's impending birth, and then how they carve that symbolism into their body."

The concepts are sound. After spending some time with *F.E.A.R. 3* we saw what he was talking about and the iconography and lighting are the game's strengths. Where it struggles at the moment is making Point Man a noteworthy character, though co-op goes a way in bringing something entertaining – even if it isn't new – to the genre. Point Man's skill, apart from being able to wield lots of guns, is a bullet-time effect. Stay with us here. Co-op pits Point Man and his psychic warrior brother Fettel together, and the spooky sibling is much more entertaining. He can take over an enemy's body for a short amount of time before exploding them from the inside out, and also uses his psychic abilities to levitate foes and shoot bolts of psychic energy at them.

Fettel can't be used from the start of the single-player game, due to the narrative. We weren't told exactly how Fettel would be incorporated into the solo campaign but we're betting he's folded in throughout.

Day One Studios want to expand on the 'Alma-verse', the netherworld where Alma exists and how it and she are breaking through into the real world. Schuller explains.

"Instead of taking you away to some ethereal place and transporting you back, her world and constructs are literally taking over the world we're in, and that's manifesting in the environment, the skies and in things that



The lights are on but nobody's home. **Or are they?**

are happening on the ground. We're trying to blur the Alma reality with ours in a way that the other two games didn't do as much. That's the focus of our game; as time progresses closer to the birth of the child things really start to get out of control and scale up even bigger."

*F.E.A.R. 3* promises lots, taking the fight from tight spaces to huge open environments, as well as expanding on the mech – Power Armour – combat. We didn't get to see any mech content on our visit, but Schuller assures us that they're "taking it into a bigger role in our game."

Co-op's fun, but years of playing shooters and action games taught us to check the opposite direction for enemies when in a duo. Problem was that only one person, usually the guy in the lead, triggered any dynamic events. We sometimes heard a spine-tingling blast of strings when looking at a plain wall while our co-op partner saw some freaky stuff.

While we weren't totally blown away at this point in time, *F.E.A.R. 3* still has many months ahead of its release. We just hope it has the capacity to surprise us in more ways than one.

**Paul Taylor**

## They Say

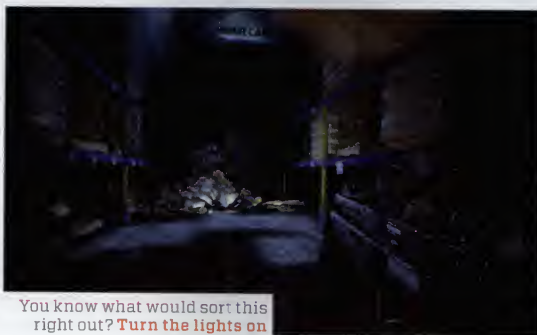
"*F.E.A.R. 3* continues the *F.E.A.R.* brand legacy, unleashing a paranormal horror first person shooter that delivers frenetic combat grounded in reality"

## We Say

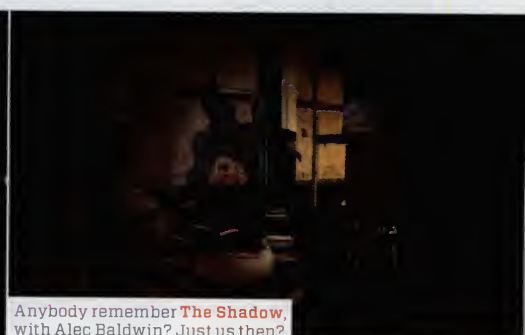
The gunplay needs to be tighter in order to forgive the so-so visuals. That generative scare feature looks amazing though.

## Verdict

BAD SHAPE  
NEEDS WORK  
GOT POTENTIAL  
**LOOKING GOOD**  
GREAT STUFF  
SURE-THING



You know what would sort this right out? **Turn the lights on**



Anybody remember **The Shadow**, with Alec Baldwin? Just us then?



Cardboard boxes: not known for their bulletproof qualities

# Deus Ex: Human Revolution

We all want to change the world

## The Pitch

A cyberpunk fantasy that takes the spirit of the original game and gives you some awesome toys to play with.

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3  
**GENRE:** SHOOTER  
**EXPECTED RELEASE:** 2011  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** NAMCO  
**BANDAI PARTNERS**  
**DEVELOPER:** EIDOS  
**MONTREAL**  
**PLAYERS:** 1

Life's just one surprise after another. One minute you're controlling a man with arms that turn into blades as he sneaks through the ventilation shafts in a police station on his way to the morgue. He's trying to steal a highly sensitive implant from a corpse, but one tiny slip-up – in this case your finger on a shoulder button – and that grenade you accidentally lobbed has the cops searching for you.

The 'sneaky sneaky' approach is a write off. Pistol drawn and with Detroit's finest on his tail, Adam Jensen – that's you in this cyberpunk-infused adventure – has to adapt his strategy to make it out alive with the implant and his life.

There's a security system up ahead – a turret and forcefield. No problem. A couple of well placed EMP grenades disables both of them, and Jensen's in the clear. He could've employed his hacking skills to disable the electronics, shot his way out of the station, or jumped back in the vents and found another way out. Choice is tantamount to success, and your enjoyment. The actions you take have repercussions in future levels, so picking the path of least resistance now may earn you a reputation later, and significantly alter the ending. Hello multiple play throughs!

Your body modifications – augmentations, or 'aug's' for short – allow you to see through objects, punch through walls, turn invisible, and more. Below the mechanical parts you're still

human, so chatting to those around you – or just eavesdropping – will yield information vital to your progression.

Both Detroit and another level we've seen, set in Shanghai, ooze atmosphere. Shanghai in particular looks amazing; a towering metropolis that smoothers the screen in digital neon, as animated billboards try to cut through the steam and grime. It's a city on two levels, and you're wandering below the crazy criss-crossing structure above. It makes your skin feel dirty just looking at it.

Indeed, it's one aspect of the game that makes Sebastien Bisch, the game's marketing director, the most excited. He acknowledged the depth of choices and conversations with NPCs, but said "every time I see that alley, I'm in *Blade Runner*, I'm in the movie. I see all the neon and the smoke. All these things help with increasing the immersion, they help with the believability of the character, of the story and you know they throw you into that world in 2027."

The original *Deus Ex* still has people blabbing about how great it was, and that's 10 years old. PS2 gamers had the chance to play it, but we're betting many of you let it slip you by.

Don't worry. That's why *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* is a prequel, designed to ease you into the *Deus Ex* lore and probably make you curse not playing its older brother all those years ago. **Paul Taylor**

## They Say

"*Deus Ex: Human Revolution* challenges the foundations of gaming and provides an immersive experience where every choice has a lasting consequence."

## We Say

It looks incredible, and Adam Jensen is a character we want to get to know more deeply. We're walking away with more questions than answers.

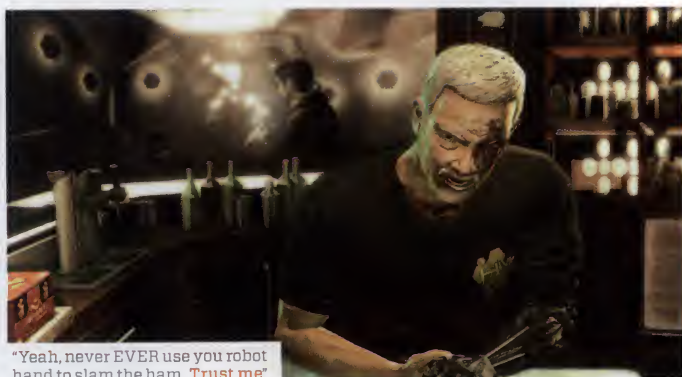
## Verdict

BAD SHAPE  
NEEDS WORK  
GOT POTENTIAL  
LOOKING GOOD  
**GREAT STUFF**  
SURE-THING

## Under the influence

Cyberpunk plays a big role in *Human Revolution*, as does the Greek tale of Icarus who flew too close to the sun. The symbolism of a man wanting to push himself to the limits before crashing back to Earth – literally and metaphorically – rings true for the character of Alex Jensen. But what else has inspired the team? Bisch tells us.

"It depends on if you talk in terms of the world and the story or the art direction. For the art direction 'The Girl With The Pearl Earring' was another reference for the Renaissance as well as a lot of Dutch painters, like Vermeer. In terms of entertainment references, we were all big fans of all the cyberpunk movies starting with *Blade Runner* and *The Matrix* if you want. Those are a lot of the influences. I think we watched a lot of the movies and read the books that are in that setting. And we really try and immerse ourselves in that type of environment, to digest it and create our own flavour of a near future dystopian world."



"Yeah, never EVER use you robot hand to slam the ham. Trust me"



Never bring knees to a gunfight. It'll just end in a capping

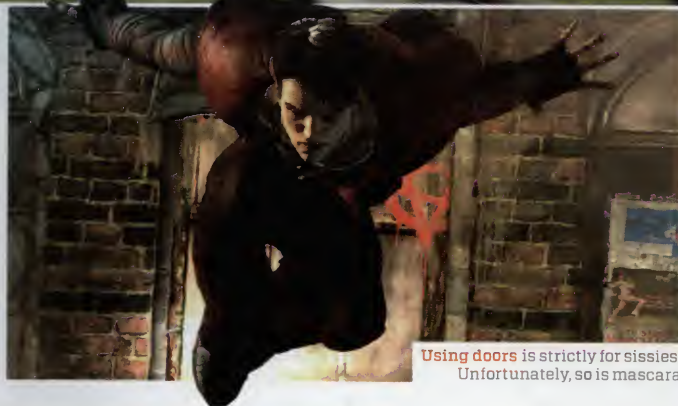
# Devil May Cry

Devil may also wear... Prada?

Reboots are all the teenage rage nowadays. You can't turn around in a theatre without witnessing the technicolour and exuberance drain from your favourite heroes. Whether you appreciate this concept or not, it's paying dividends for movie companies, which has – of course – prompted game developers to follow suit. Leading this charge is Capcom's bold new take on *Devil May Cry*'s Dante, a design divergence that some fans are taking like a reboot to the genitals.

"We knew we were going to upset a lot of people," admits Ninja Theory creative director Tameem Antoniades. "There's always that group. But for me as a massive fan of the series, especially when it first came out, it represented everything that was cool. Across all media coolness was distilled in that game. If you talk to someone today and try to sell that character to them you don't get that reaction at all".

To recapture this 'cultural impact' Capcom has tasked Ninja Theory with not just resetting the series; they're being told to go back and tell the previously unknown origin story of the character. "He's younger, this guy – rebellious" Tameem tells us. "DMC will tell the tale of how Dante becomes the guy we all know. It doesn't perhaps follow the



Using doors is strictly for sissies. Unfortunately, so is mascara

## The Pitch

Play as a younger, edgier Dante and discover the origin of his lustrous grey locks. Probably.

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3

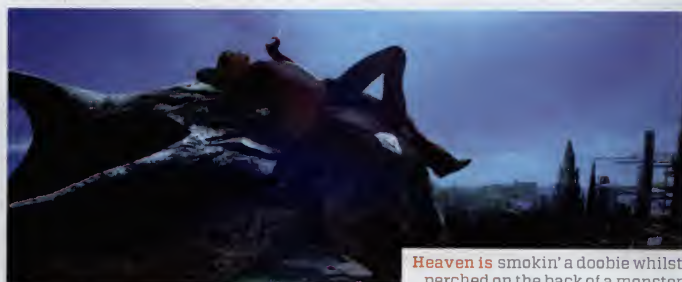
**GENRE:** ACTION

**RELEASE:** 2011

**DISTRIBUTOR:** THQ

**DEVELOPER:** CAPCOM

**PLAYERS:** 1



Heaven is smokin' a doobie whilst perched on the back of a monster

## Run DMC, run

If you're one of those knee-jerk reactionists who is considerably less than impressed with Dante's makeover, just remember that (rabid) *inFAMOUS* fans got Sucker Punch to ditch its pretty-boy vision of Cole for something more familiar to what was in the original game.

It's therefore not out of the question that enough negative feedback on the interwebs (or more direct communication lines – like lit poop in a bag) can bring about a change. Personally, after having played *Enslaved* we have faith in the talented folks at Ninja Theory. As long as we get to kill crap, looks don't matter.

canon to the letter but it is in the same space. Like most other reboots out there we look at the existing templates and leverage a considerable amount of canon from them but we do take artistic license where it makes sense."

Contemporising Dante seems to be a two-pronged assault. Both visual appearance and the musical taste will witness big changes.

Pleasurable aural experiences aside we're assured that the core action in DMC will be handled by *Devil May Cry* veteran Hideaki Itsuno. According to Antoniades Itsuno-san is "very concerned about maintaining the input and the mechanical DNA of *Devil May Cry* when it comes to combat." Sounds like a fair trade-off to us.

While the core of what DMC is seems to be being maintained, Capcom is Westernising the parts of the formula that, while being perfectly acceptable in a Japanese design sense, are positively archaic or odd by some gamer's standards. Kooky narrative and dialogue is one element that springs to mind here – spartan, non-interactive environments another.

The obvious concern is whether a British studio (Ninja Theory), a North American branch (Capcom US) and a Japanese overseer (Capcom Japan) can all play together well enough to deliver a coherent vision of this franchise's future.

"Honestly, we're in communication with each other all time," Antoniades assures us. "Stylistically the idea is to make DMC feel different. But in terms of the precision of the mechanics and the gameplay, we're heading the project in a direction that fans will love". We want to believe in this, we really do. **Adam Mathew**

## They Say

"A reboot of *Devil May Cry* and Dante that will absolutely please fans in the long-run. Just give us some time to prove it"

## We Say

Sadly, we live in a world of surfaces and appearances. When it comes to judging this new Dante, we'll base 90 per cent of our opinion on his combat abilities and his voice.

## Verdict

BAD SHAPE  
NEEDS WORK  
GOT POTENTIAL  
**LOOKING GOOD**  
GREAT STUFF  
SURE-THING



Well, that's totally  
feather pluckin' insane

# The Last Guardian

Five bucks says the cat/bird dies at the end

**T**eam Ico is notoriously tight-lipped when revealing information about its games. Much of what we'll see in the future can be gleaned from its titles in the past and we're in no way doubting the quality of this upcoming production.

It's a studio that takes its time between releasing titles. *The Last Guardian* represents the third game from the Japanese based developer in a decade – four if you count the remastered editions of its first two titles (see 'Out of the shadows'). Only Polyphony Digital rivals them for taking its sweet time in getting a title out the door.

*Guardian's* thematically similar to the two predecessors in that you're involved in a partnership that depends on the simplest of commands, and only one member of the duo is controllable. In this case, it's the (as yet) unnamed boy, while Trico – the cat/bird hybrid – follows your lead.

While Ico and Yorda went together hand in hand – literally – their behaviour around each other never changed. Yorda trusted and acted the same around Ico at the start of the game as she did towards the end. Wander and his horse Agro were an established duo before the intro to *Shadow of the Colossus*, and it was possible to give simple commands to Agro. You'll have no such connection here. Trico's an untrusting beast at first, chained up in a castle, so it's up to the boy to develop a relationship with it.

Trico's like a kitten in that objects interest it, and it seems very playful too. The boy will have to tempt Trico to the places he wants it to go with barrels, torches and such, as there's no fictional language in Team Ico's latest. The castle

that Trico's imprisoned in is a bit of a crumbling wreck with looming platforms and towers that would be impossible to climb alone. Need to reach something many times higher than a youth? Get Trico to stretch up it and climb its back. Trico's long tail will be used as a handhold as well, as it swishes and sways around.

As your relationship develops, Trico also proves to be a forceful ally, eliminating the spooky, disintegrating guards by swiping them with its talons. It's a powerful creature that must fit into small spaces – Trico's design has changed from being dog-like to the cat/bird so that it would be more lithe. Still, there are some places it just won't go without a bit of force and we've seen it busting through doorways, scattering bricks and stones.

Whether this destruction is dynamic or pre-determined is unknown, but as you wind your way up and through the castle it begins to fall apart, making future endeavours more difficult. We're most fearful that one of the two protagonists is going to die in this, and after staring at these screenshots we're still wondering why Trico has a bunch of spears sticking in his side in all of them. We're choking up just thinking about it. **Paul Taylor**

## They Say

"It's not a pet game, but there is a live animal in the game. [It's] an adventure game [in which] you play with this animal."

## We Say

Who ever knew an imaginary creature could elicit so much real emotion? It's already looking like another great Team Ico duo, and a fabulous PlayStation partnership.

## Verdict

BAD SHAPE  
NEEDS WORK  
GOT POTENTIAL  
**LOOKING GOOD**  
GREAT STUFF  
SURE-THING

## The Pitch

Epic fantasy adventure in the way only Team Ico can do it.

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3

**GENRE:** ADVENTURE

**EXPECTED RELEASE:** 2011

**DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY

**DEVELOPER:** TEAM ICO

**PLAYERS:** 1-TBA

## Out of the shadows

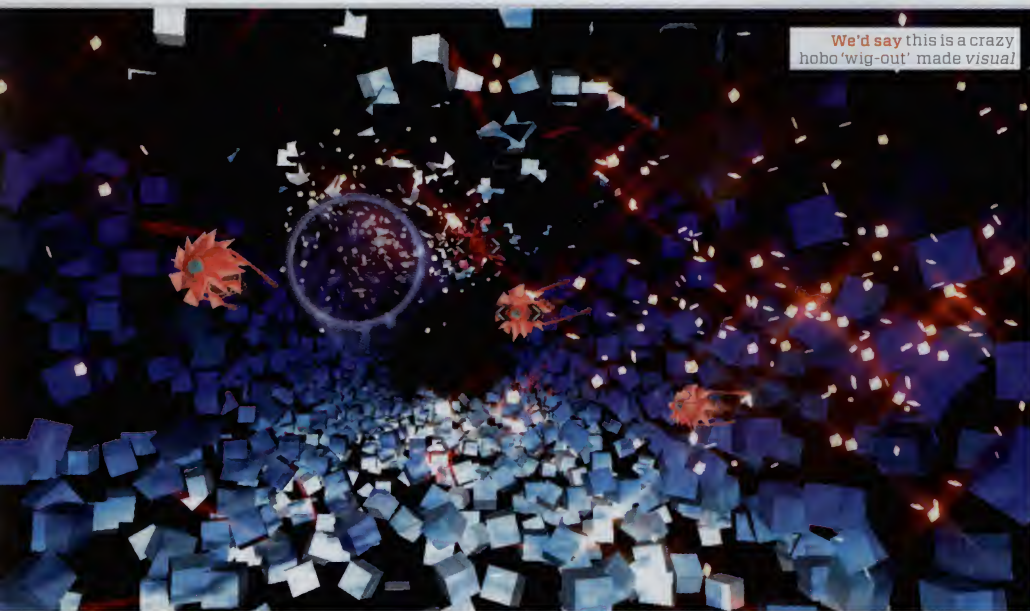
Coming next year is the another remastered collection of PS2 games, *Ico* and *Shadow of the Colossus*. Like the *God of War Collection*, both games will be on the one Blu-ray and have Trophies, but unlike Kratos' double pack you'll be able to play them in 3D.

*Ico* and *Shadow of the Colossus* were well received critically and the two titles have built up a fan base – either through people who bought and played it, or (increasingly) from the frantic ravings and recommendations that's rubbed off onto the rest of the population. All we can say is believe the hype. Having them back in an HD form will be superb.

"Hey kid, I've got my eye on you so put the valuables down"







We'd say this is a crazy hobo 'wig-out' made visual



Explanations are a secondary concern with a shoot button



"I wish, I wish, I hadn't killed that fish"

# Child of Eden

Trippin'. Balls

While testing out *Child of Eden* at Tokyo Games Show we were surprised to have our demo delivered by Aussie expat, Lindsay Gray, product manager of Q Entertainment.

"This is my dream job," Lindsay tells us later, over a beer, "I've worked my way up from learning Japanese, hospitality and game localisation, to finally get a chance to work on this awesome IP".

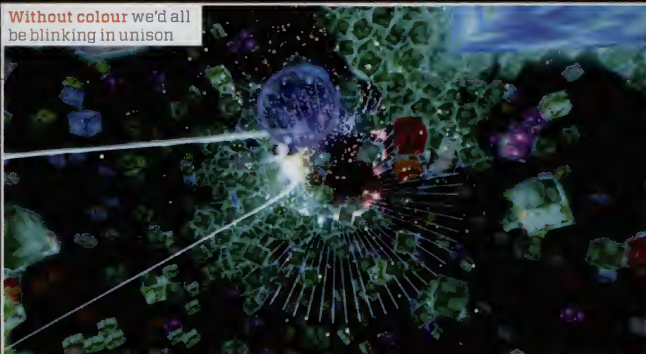
We couldn't agree more with his glowing appraisal; just like its predecessor, *Rez*, *Child of Eden* is a striking aural and visual assault. The implementation of *Move* looks like it'll deepen the immersion even more.

Curious, we ask Gray why he chose Q Entertainment. "I wanted to work with Tetsuya Mizuguchi because he is passionate about his

projects," is his immediate response. Ordinarily we'd take that as a safe, 'must-avoid-getting-fired' response but, after witnessing first-hand the meticulous care that has gone into this psychedelic 'art concerto' it's hard to be a non-believer. We found out that the game will feature five levels, called Archives, each with a different visual theme that will morph each time depending on the player's performance and style of play in the previous run. In addition to that, you'll have to nimbly switch between the traditional lock-on mechanic and a new, ever-firing Vulcan cannon.

Much like *Rez* – and art or music in general – it's difficult to quantify *Child of Eden* in mere words. All we can tell you is: we know what we like, and this beautiful HD experience is in that category. **Adam Mathew**

Without colour we'd all be blinking in unison



## The Pitch

A version of *Space Harrier* that rewards kills with bursts of melody and colour.

## Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: MUSIC

EXPECTED RELEASE: 2011

DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

DEVELOPER: Q SOFTWARE

PLAYERS: 1

## They Say

"An experiment of synesthesia, integrating sound, vision and touch in one seamless experience"

## We Say

Ohhh, we can seeee the muuuusic. Who needs hallucinogens anymore?

## Verdict

BAD SHAPE  
NEEDS WORK  
GOT POTENTIAL  
LOOKING GOOD  
GREAT STUFF

**SURE THING**

# Castlevania

- Lords of Shadow -

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# THE TOP 50 PLAYSTATION GAMES *EVER!*

To celebrate issue 50 of the only PlayStation magazine that is 100 per cent written and designed in Australia, here are our picks for the 50 best PlayStation games available today ►





**50 ▶ Mashed: Fully Loaded** PS2  
Behold; the greatest single-screen multiplayer game ever created for a Sony console (or any other brand, for that matter). Get this, a multitap, three buddies, turn it on, select the Polar Wharf track and say adios to the rest of your day. Brilliant.



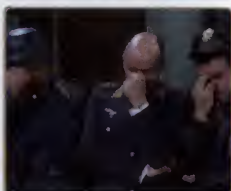
**49 ▶ DJ Hero 2** PS3  
The original was a solid concept that made us feel like club superstars. The sequel steps up that sensation considerably and offers a metric buttload of bad-ass beats. Link this game with a decent sound system and your house will be casa de party.



**48 ▲ Worms: Armageddon** PSone  
Pro tip: turn-based gameplay usually sucks and blows. Amazingly, this theorem cannot be applied to the Worms series and Armageddon is by far the pick of the litter. How can you not love a chess-like game that has jetpacks and explosive sheep?



**47 ▲ Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3** PS2  
There was nothing particularly wrong with Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 but it's the third in the series we remember most fondly. Massive combos in the airport, activating the crazy slo-mo and moon gravity cheats – it's the very zenith of arcade skateboarding.



## OPS REGRETS PUTTING MARK SERRELS IN A SKIRT

But hey, that was the old crew. Don't blame us for that because we accept zero responsibility for it. And no, we're not printing it again.



**46 ▲ PixelJunk Shooter** PSN  
Twin stick shooters were a massive trend last year and Shooter is the best out of a great bunch. It balanced all-out shooting with clever level destruction, and was strung together with a simple narrative. Undeniably proving simple concepts are the strongest.



**45 ▲ Space Invaders Extreme** PSP  
It's not on this list because of a trite, 'what's old is cool' vibe. Extreme perfectly links you to the game through hypnotic beats, simple gameplay structures, and its wicked charm. It's insanely addictive too, begging to be replayed harder, faster and smoother.



**44 ▲ Silent Hill** PSone  
Sure, some of the follow-ups had their moments – but stumbling through this for the first time made us piss our pant-suit. Silent Hill represents one of the few times when the graphical limitations of a console actually aided the experience. Creepy.



**43 ▲ Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee** PSone  
Fart button. All games need one, few rise to the challenge and include it. Bursting with quirky charm as much as flatulence, Abe's Oddysee blew minds back in the day and still stands as one of the best 2D games ever crafted by the hand of man.



**42 ▲ Wipeout 3: Special Edition** PSone  
If you mapped improvements versus impact on a graph, 2097 would possibly just peg Wipeout 3. But, this Special Edition takes the incredible framerate of Wipeout 3, some of the best bits of 2097, and adds Dual Shock support. Amazing value, even against HD.



**41 ▲ Castlevania: Symphony of the Night** PSone  
When Konami decided to borrow and build upon the concepts of Super Metroid, Symphony of the Night and platforming perfection was born. In terms of duration, this (blood) sucker just keeps on giving and Dracula's castle has more secrets locked in it than an Area 51 warehouse. A true classic.



**40 ▲ The Warriors** PS2  
Play this and try not to pine for a world where Rockstar Toronto handled every movie-to-game adaptation – especially the classic ones. The Warriors remains the finest movie-based game ever. The detail, the music, shot-for-shot recreations of entire film scenes – it's quite remarkable. All within a solid beat 'em up adventure to boot.



**39 ▲ ModNation Racers** PS3  
Before ModNation Racers came along this space would've been reserved for Crash Team Racing. Despite its age, kart racing has never been better. To be fair, however, ModNation Racers (with its simply huge suite of creation tools for custom tracks and characters) is really the next step in this often-forgotten genre.





### 38 ▲ **Lumines** PSP

Oooh, you can see the *music*. A common response to *Lumines* the first time it gets played, but that's just the hook. The game's super-addictive slant on *Tetris* is what makes it burrow into your brain like a tick singing the Oompa Loompa song.



### 37 ▲ **Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker** PSP

This is a must-play whether you own a PSP or not. A damn pretty technical achievement, it embarrasses many other games on the PS3 with the sheer amount of stuff to do and ways to do it.



### 36 ▶ **Tekken 5** PS2

Sure, *Tekken 6* was released, but the fifth 'proper' *Tekken* was like a greatest hits collection thanks to the clever inclusion of *Tekken 3* and its predecessors. It still looks pretty too, and you'd have to be miserable to consider it a downgrade from 6.



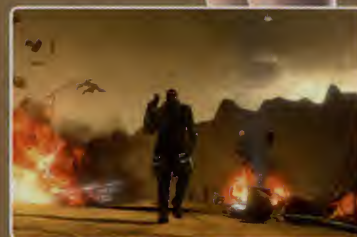
### 35 ▶ **We Love Katamari** PS2

Not since The Hives' album *Your New Favourite Band* has the title for a product been this cocky and, ultimately, correct. Speaking candidly, we have nerd boners for this and one play of it was all it took to roll us up into its wacky Japanese embrace.



### 34 ▲ **Fight Night Round 4** PS3

A stunning recreation of the sweet science, *Fight Night Round 4* is the most realistic punch-fest ever. We love the fact that the replay function allows you to watch blows land from any angle and at any speed, so confident were EA Canada in the gameplay.



### 33 ▲ **Red Faction: Guerrilla** PS3

This and *Just Cause 2* are office favourites for the times when we just want to destroy things. The free-form annihilation makes it stupidly addictive and we're constantly ducking back into it to shave seconds off any demolition challenges. A real treat.

### 32 ▶ **Hitman: Blood Money** PS2

The *Hitman* series is based on such a simple premise we're always amazed nobody is ripping it off. *Blood Money* is the best of the bunch. There's just something unnervingly satisfying about executing a well-planned execution. More so when you do it in a giant bird costume.

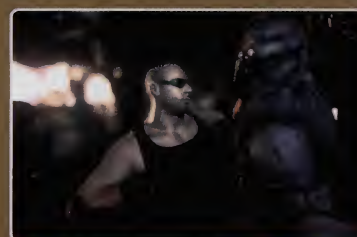


### 31 ▲ **Driver** PSone

Real cars don't just go around corners, they peel around them, sideways. Similarly, a 'real' car game shouldn't just provide an accelerator, it needs a dedicated burnout button. Granted *Driver* is now uglier than a bulldog chewing a wasp's nest, but holy crap they nailed fun handling physics.

## OPS LOVES RANDY PITCHFORD

We've met literally hundreds of individual developers over the past 50 issues but we don't think we've met anyone as thoroughly and completely enthusiastic as Randy Pitchford. Dude loves games, and he loves talking about them.



### 30 ▲ **The Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena** PS3

We dig the 'two games for the price of one' concept. If you haven't played either of these yet (particularly *Escape From Butcher Bay*) you're doing your thumbs a disservice. Whether it's shooting, stabbing, eye-shining or seagulling smokes, being Riddick rocks.



### 29 ▲ **Okami** PS2

We came for art style, we stayed for the story. And the clever gameplay. And the themes. Oh, look, this is just a beautiful game from beginning to end, another cruelly overlooked title where critical gushing didn't translate into sales. Blending together role-playing with platforming, and a simple combat system, this needs a sequel.



### 28 ▲ **BioShock** PS3

Type 'thinking-man shooter' into Google and you'll be presented with two pictures: John Wilkes Booth and a pack-shot of *BioShock*. Never before has fast-paced shooter action been married so perfectly with a deep upgrade system, morality choices and a plot that twists like a pretzel with scoliosis. Would you kindly play this again? Thanks.



### 27 ▲ **Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped** PSone

This is where pure platforming peaked. *Crash Bandicoot 3* is still the defining 2.5D platformer after 15 years of PlayStation. It's got a massive variety of levels, it's got an endless replay factor and it can still charm you faster than Sean Connery with a \$100 note sticking out of his fly.





26 ▲  
**Jak 3** PS2  
 Jak II revolutionised what a platform game could be but *Jak 3* evolved it further still. Works best as the third chapter of one of the best gaming trilogies ever, but if you had to choose just one *Jak 3* is certainly the best. Naughty Dog you magnificent bastards.



25 ▲  
**V8 Supercars 3** PS2  
*V8 Supercars 3* is the only racing game, other than *F1 2010*, that seems to understand the ferocity of real racing. With development costs up it's unlikely there'll ever be a racing game as content rich and license-packed as this again. Plus Bathurst!



24 ▲  
**Shadow of the Colossus** PS2  
 Marvel at the Colossi, stay for the beauty. It's forever unmatched as a concept and pours on the spooky, ethereal atmosphere like a waterfall of silk. Part adventure, part puzzler; it's pure drama on your PS2. The HD version ought to sell an obscene amount of copies.



23 ▲  
**Assassin's Creed II** PS3  
 Ezio > Altair. It's mathematical fact. Also, Italy is a richer setting that is bursting with political intrigue and exponentially cooler inventions and gadgets for you to deal death with. If only our own DNA-held memories were as rad as this game.



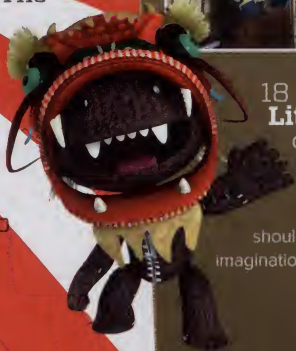
22 ▲  
**Resident Evil 4** PS2  
 Yeah, we know Capcom did *Resident Evil 5* and, yeah, we know it was two-player. Even still, this is one of the prettiest games on PS2 and it is markedly better than its successor because it's actually tense and scary. Make us a HD version. Now.



21 ▲  
**Borderlands Game of the Year Edition** PS3  
 Loot: gaming's answer to chocolate heroin cigarettes. Even more so when the collectible items are an arsenal of increasingly bad-arse guns, like a fully automatic sniper rifle that shoots acid.

## OPS LOVES JAPAN

We've been everywhere to bring you award-winning games coverage, including (but not limited to) LA, Chicago, Dallas, San Francisco, San Diego, New York, Vancouver, Hawaii, Monte Carlo, Bucharest, Paris, London, Copenhagen and Stockholm. We even went to New Zealand. Once. We estimate that between ourselves and past staff members we've covered around 603,282 kilometres tracking down games overseas since March 2007. Our favourite place of all? Tokyo. The developers and public hit the right balance of being quirky, excited and professional, and the food is sensational. If you haven't been, go right now. Please.



20 ▲  
**Braid** PSN  
 It's a platformer and it's a puzzle game. It's like the memory of a classic title but with the art style of an oil painting. Plus, it will make your brain hurt. We adore the technical achievement and applaud the thought that went into creating every stage. A modern masterpiece.



19 ▲  
**Final Fantasy VII** PSOne  
 When you play a JRPG it's impossible not to compare it to this beautiful behemoth. It is, however, entirely possible to put this in your PlayStation and not play anything else for 100 hours or more. The sheer amount of side-quests yield buckets of satisfaction and the story is timeless.



18 ▲  
**LittleBigPlanet** PS3  
 Good luck finding something that offers more value for money, and with as much Stephen Fry. The single player campaign is a means to an end; you should go online to appreciate the sheer imagination of fellow gamers. Amazing stuff.



17 ▲  
**God of War Collection** PS3  
 The original was an influential and groundbreaking title and the sequel proved it wasn't a fluke. This HD package presents these epics like never before. The formula doesn't change but the intensity just ramps up and up. Sure you can punch Hercules' face off in the third, but the story in the original was the best. Often imitated but never beaten.





16 ▲  
**Skate 2** PS3

*Skate 2* got under our skin and stayed there in a way that not even *Skate 3* could match. Find an insane drop and you could waste *hours* bombing off it, not completing a single objective in the process. Bliss.

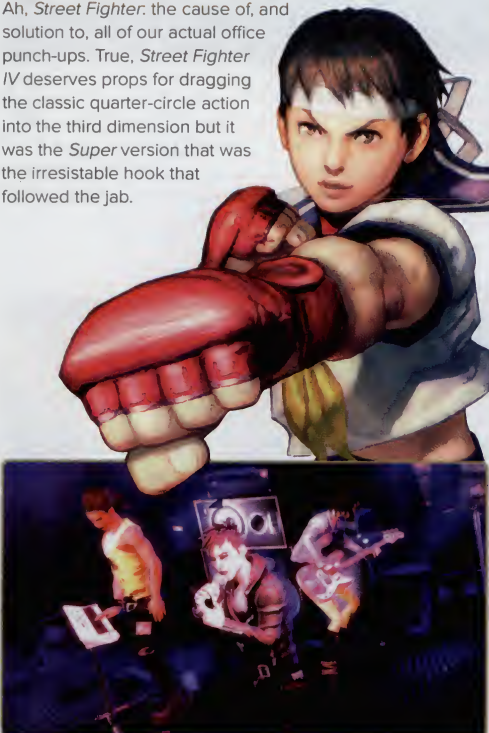


14 ▲  
**The Orange Box** PS3

Tight-arses everywhere rejoice. Five, count them, *five* games for the price of one are in this pack and each of them are much better than the majority of uni-games out there. Ignore the whingers who cry 'bad port'. This is epic value.

12 ▼  
**Super Street Fighter IV** PS3

Ah, *Street Fighter*: the cause of, and solution to, all of our actual office punch-ups. True, *Street Fighter IV* deserves props for dragging the classic quarter-circle action into the third dimension but it was the *Super* version that was the irresistible hook that followed the jab.



10 ▲  
**Rock Band 3** PS3

The music games market may have suffered from too much saturation of late but *Rock Band 3* proves music games can be just as cutting-edge and essential if you're actually willing to innovate. *Rock Band 3* isn't just the perfect party game; it's a reason to have parties in the first place. Full review next issue.



15 ▲  
**Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence** PS2

A perfect package. *MGS3* is just so refined, addressing gamers' complaints of too-long conversations and making Snake's adventures more fun. *Subsistence* is pure gravy, adding a new camera and the original *Metal Gear* titles.



13 ▲  
**Burnout 3: Takedown** PS2

Before *Burnout* went all sandbox and trendy it had perfected closed-circuit racing form with *Burnout 3: Takedown*. And yes, we're deliberately ignoring *Burnout Revenge* because Traffic Checking was an idiotic idea.



11 ▲  
**Just Cause 2** PS3

All right, so the story is woeful – and decades from now critics will be wondering how a game with voice acting this racist ever hit shelves – but man, this game is cool. With its parachute and grappling hook *Just Cause 2* proves that the best fun to have is random.



09 ▲  
**FIFA 11** PS3

It's the best sports game ever made. It's that simple. There's just something beautifully straightforward about two mates challenging each other in a sports game and *FIFA 11* is the chance of choice when it comes to couch-based competition. We'll have hundreds of matches between now and 2012.

## OPS LOVES LISTS

To mark the 15th anniversary of PlayStation we've assembled the top 15 best-selling PlayStation games ever. Whilst sales figures for games tend to be vague this is a decent indication of the number of copies sold for each title around the world. Staggering.

- 15 **Grand Theft Auto IV** PS3  
6.76 million
- 14 **Crash Bandicoot** PSone  
6.80 million
- 13 **Tekken 3** PSone  
6.91 million
- 12 **Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped** PSone  
7.12 million
- 11 **Final Fantasy X** PS2  
7.95 million
- 10 **Final Fantasy VIII** PSone  
8.15 million
- 9 **Modern Warfare 2** PS3  
8.52 million
- 8 **Gran Turismo 2** PSone  
9.37 million
- 7 **Final Fantasy VII** PSone  
9.8 million
- 6 **Gran Turismo 4** PS2  
10.76 million
- 5 **Gran Turismo** PSone  
10.85 million
- 4 **Grand Theft Auto III** PS2  
11.60 million
- 3 **Grand Theft Auto: Vice City** PS2  
14.20 million
- 2 **Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec** PS2  
14.89 million



- 1 **Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas** PS2  
17.33 million





08 ▲  
**Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare  
 Game of the Year Edition** PS3

*Modern Warfare* could've ended here. The campaign ended on a real cliffhanger that's open to interpretation and brought the series – and shooters in general – into a present-day environment. Plus, it gave the world Captain Price, one of the strongest characters we've ever seen. The multiplayer's addictive, it still looks amazing, and the Game of the Year Edition chucks in the Variety map free for free. An enduring legacy and even more memorable than its sequel.

## OPS LOVES MIKE HAGGAR

Mayor Mike. We've been pestering Capcom at every single opportunity to bring back this baron of brawling, to no avail (and mostly just laughter). It's not a joke, world.



07 ▲  
**Grand Theft Auto: The Trilogy** PS2

Like the *God of War Collection* we've cheated again, if only to appease those here who still adore the '80s excess of *Vice City* (pictured). The real reason it's this high, however, is *San Andreas*. It has everything. Puskbikes. Combine harvesters. Jump jets. Freight trains. Monster trucks. Hovercraft. Helicopter gunships. Jumbos. A *goddamn* jetpack. It has a vast and vivid world with three huge cities. Hours of hilarious radio stations. An amazing cast. Unlimited gameplay. The best cheats in history. Fact is it's *still* unmatched in scope.



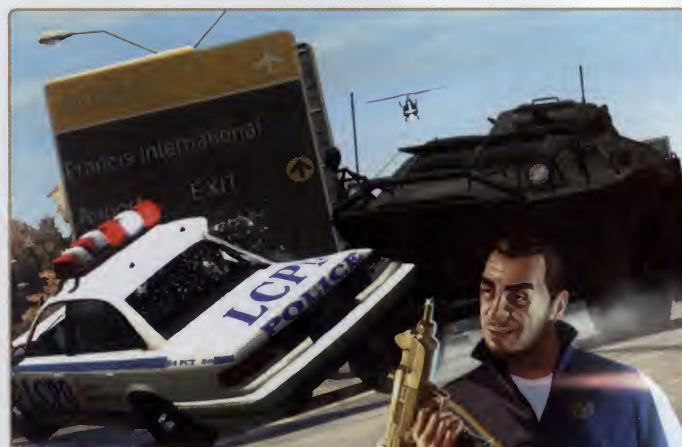
06 ▲  
**Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots** PS3

At many points it's more a movie than a game, particularly towards the end of act five, but when it is a game there are few as infinitely-refined and perfectly-polished as this. An endlessly replayable campaign guarantees your experience of each level will change during multiple playthroughs. New players will get lost in the dense, self-indulgent story but old-hands will be in heaven.



05 ▲  
**Fallout 3: Game of the Year Edition** PS3

An utterly enthralling RPG that manages to pull off the unthinkable by blending turn-based and real-time combat and making the conncoction wow the trousers off fans from both camps. The living, breathing world (read: irradiated, dead husk) of the Wasteland has a story in every shanty and a cannibalsic psycho waiting for you behind every foothill. After playing this we'd actually welcome the post-apocalypse.



04 ▲  
**Grand Theft Auto: Episodes  
 from Liberty City** PS3

Edges out *GTAIV* thanks to two slightly cooler campaigns and the huge swag of awesome extras. Parachutes and tanks spring to mind. Still lacks the sheer variety of *San Andreas* but the technical stuff is just incredible to watch.



03 ▲  
**Gran Turismo Sport** PS3

The release of this mega-racer has suffered yet another setback; you'll need to wait just a little longer to get behind the wheel. Rest assured, however, this is a genre-defining title like no other. The level of detail in this game is like nothing you've ever seen before and the amount of content its coming stuffed with is going to last you a long, long time. Review next issue. You know, assuming the best.





02 ◀

## Red Dead Redemption PS3

*Red Dead Redemption* is the pinnacle of action/adventure games on PS3. Taking the running gear from *GTA IV* and adapting it to a sweeping open-world Western was a masterstroke. Beautiful yet brutal, *Red Dead Redemption* is a truly epic and action-packed journey from start to finish. As an added bonus? They're adding zombies (see page 82).



01 ▶

## Uncharted 2: Among Thieves PS3

The most critically acclaimed game of 2009, *Uncharted 2* is the most astonishing game we've played on PS3 to date. *GT5's* graphics are peerless, and we'll never tire of *Red Dead's* gameplay, but *Uncharted 2* is a complete package like no other. Thrilling and impossible not to enjoy, *Uncharted 2* is remarkable. No game has ever come as close to capturing the style and personality of an action movie. With unmatched presentation this fast-paced treasure hunt just gives and gives.



# READER TOP 100

AGREE? DISAGREE? LET US KNOW!

**I**s your favourite game missing from our *OPS* Top 50? Put down the pitchfork and get online. We're putting together a reader-voted top 100 in response to our top 50 so get on board and make yourself heard. The rules are simple: you just need to vote for any PlayStation game that's been available that you'd still play today. We're talking about truly timeless games you'd take away to a desert island rather than the ones you fondly remember but have been drastically outclassed. The ones you'll *always* love, regardless of how old they get.

► Log onto to [www.surveymonkey.com/s/OPSReader100](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/OPSReader100) and make some noise and be sure to visit [www.facebook.com/OPSAustralia](http://www.facebook.com/OPSAustralia) to drum up support for your most beloved games. We are raiding our prize cupboard right now for goodies to give out for the best responses – what are you waiting for?

VOTE  
& **WIN!**





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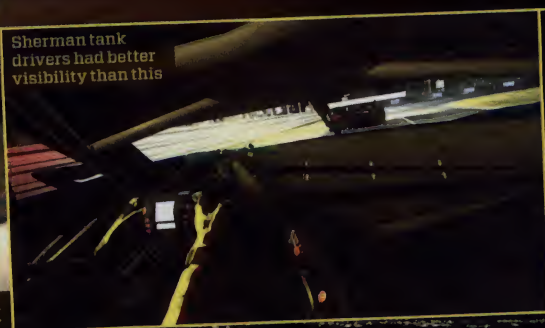
# ***Internal Combustion***

**GRAN TURISMO 5's** long-awaited return to pole position has stalled yet again before leaving the garage. Fortunately it's only a short delay – but will it really be worth the wait?









Sherman tank drivers had better visibility than this

Mechaphilia doesn't sound that crazy right now



We haven't smashed curves like this since last n... uh, nevermind

It's impossible not to speak in hyperbole when talking about what's going to be The Best Racing Game Ever. See? We did it just then. We've played it. We want to keep playing it. And now we want to tell you just what to expect when The Next Benchmark in Racing lands in the coming weeks. It's been hugely anticipated. From the moment the PS3 was announced a *Gran Turismo* game was a given. New hardware meant new possibilities for content, fidelity, and nuances in handling. Plus, since the PlayStation Network is firmly established, online racing is now part of your *Gran Turismo* experience.

What you're going to see is, beyond doubt, not just a class-leading title. It's class-defining. All this time in development won't leave *GT* lagging behind any other racing game available. Behind *Duke Nukem Forever* it's one of the most-delayed games ever – but it hasn't taken another developer to bail it out of trouble.

Each sequel improves and adds upon what came before it. Not just tiny tweaks here and there; this long gestation period equates to a package that promises to be truly magnificent.

Hundreds of cars. Dozens of tracks. Weather effects. The holy grail, damage. It's entirely probable that there's going to be stuff in *GT* that you'll never look at unless you're looking for it, and that's cool. Whether you're going out of your way to pore over every detail, all this minutiae will make you question racing games in the future. Everyone else is now going to be playing catch-up and Polyphony Digital has a five-year head start.

## INSTANT ACCESS

The core of the game remains. Pick a car, a track and race. New handling models and degrees of difficulty – the Arcade mode – are separated under three different categories: Beginner, Intermediate and Professional. Within that, you have individual options for Traction control – scalable – plus Active Steering, and also the physics model which can be toggled between Standard and Professional.

Your options for how you want to pilot a car around a track suddenly got exponentially more involved but *GT*'s about getting everyone in the world playing and racing. Absolute novices are advised to choose the Beginner mode.

Within that, opponents offer a token challenge and cars have every safety option invented turned on. Keeping the wheel at full lock and planting the accelerator from a standing start won't immediately loosen the tyres and you can expect to ease most

supercars round a track without much fuss.

You're still connected though – it's not an analgesic – and the characteristics of each machine shines through. Mercedes' latest weapon, the SLS AMG, feels like a stunning, well-rounded car. Point it towards a corner and a tonne-and-half of metal obediently goes where you want it. Without sounding detrimental it's like a car your cool grandad would buy if he decided to sell all of his possessions and buy this instead as he celebrated retirement in style.

However, pick something a bit less genteel and you'll realise how well rounded the Merc is. A Ferrari Enzo is a fine comparison piece in this case.

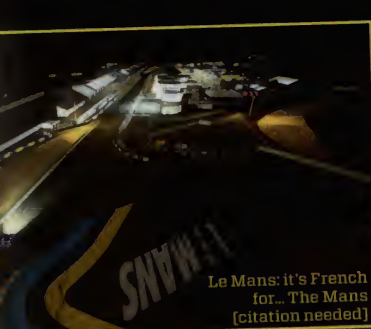
If the Merc is a pearl – precious, well-rounded, with classic good looks and grace – then the prancing horse is an angry fist of onyx with jagged edges. Rocketing down a straight is business as usual, but approaching anything more than a loose elbow with the brake clamped back to base has the Ferrari all out of shape. That's your fault.

The Ferrari adds nearly 90 more horses despite being more than 350kg lighter and sideways momentum kicks the back end out and the twitchy nose snapping for direction.

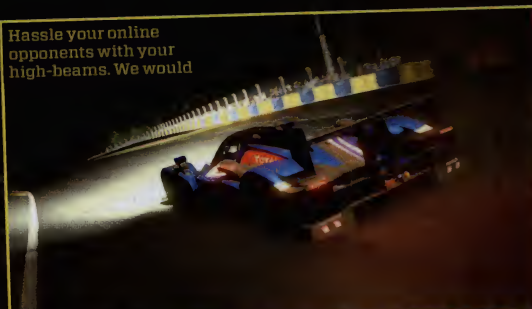
Flick Arcade Mode onto 'Intermediate' and you increase the difficulty of the AI and also lose a hand to hold. The seven other cars on the track do make mistakes but will dominate the racing line. That dotted blue line, which shows the optimal path, will probably bug purists, and we consider the braking line more of a recommendation than lore. It's at this point you're going to have to put more practice in to understand just what's going to happen at hundreds of kilometres an hour. And that's just in one car. ▶



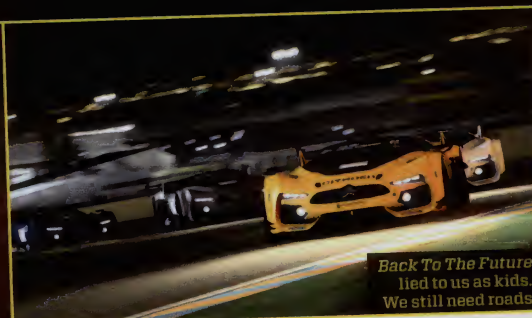




Le Mans: It's French for... The Mans [citation needed]



Hassle your online opponents with your high-beams. We would



Back To The Future lied to us as kids. We still need roads

## IT'S RAINING, IT'S POURING

We've always been suckers for details at *OPS* but we've rarely seen them as incredible as *GT5*'s new wet-weather effects. The way the water beads on the windscreen, sliding back and forth, up and down with the cornering forces and speed changes before being wiped away by the blades, is nothing short of jaw-dropping. Tunnels provide short respite from the monsoon and poor vision before the car is again buffeted by wild rain.



10 bucks if you pull the handbrake now. No? 20

"The prancing horse is an angry fist of onyx with jagged edges"







## MORE THAN A FEELING

Professional difficulty has manual transmission as standard, racing line off, opponents completely unforgiving, and arms as pretzels. Flick traction control down to zero and you can do as we did and set the car into a dizzying doughnut with tyre smoke blocking out the safety fence. Unwrapping it from that perfect circle needs fewer beans on the accelerator and a steady hand, but catching the back end as the car slowly skates back into the race is like trying to land an anvil with a large magnet.

We can't imagine really appreciating the professional settings on anything but a Logitech wheel. Our last playtest, only a few days before we went to print and mere hours after the final delay, was in a dream set up. A race seat with a massive 3D-enabled Bravia, and speakers at our ears was the perfect window into the world, and a G27 wheel delivered ample feedback.

What shocked us the most was the violence in track surfaces. Rome, Madrid and Tokyo, all city circuits, were ideal locations to learn the nuances of a car. Tokyo's wider streets, save for the wicked chicanes before the start/finish straight, will be familiar to GT vets, and the track's more thrilling and less technical than its European brethren.

Bounding over ripple strips kicked off a vibrating burp in the speakers. Since the strips offer less traction than the bitumen, any car that rode it for more than a fraction of a second began a slow slide. There's a fair bit of clearance between the edge of the ripple strip ends and the nearest wall, so launching up the side with alternating wheels kicking the material below up was accurately reflected in the speakers by our head.

## THE TEST BEGINS

Compare Tokyo with the longest track in the game, Nürburgring Nordschleife, and the differences are stark. This winding, punishing 20-odd kilometre track is a hodge podge of materials, blind corners and airstrip-like straights. The whole track undulates and never in a uniform direction.

Plus, it's fairly narrow in parts. Propelling a race-spec Nissan GT-R is a visual, aural and physical test. Rock-hard suspension means every bump is felt and reflected in the wheel's force feedback. DualShocks don't have such a problem since if the stick's in a neutral position your car's wheels are going to be kept pointing forwards.

The race cars are built for speed, not comfort. As part of the 'premium' selection of cars – just like the SLS, Enzo and eight other cars we took out – it has a full cabin view. Compared to a pure concept car – like the GT by Citroën, with a cockpit that's a cross between a Nike running shoe and a Tour De France winner's helmet – all you have is a series of switches and a blunt speedo and tachometer.

Most of the screen's dominated by it too, so you're in the equivalent of Ned Kelly's headgear. The discarded blue racing line was flicked back on after spectacularly wiping out after clipping the grass with a drive wheel at gluteal-curling speeds. The car was still running, but with bits hanging off and a reluctant gearbox.

That dotted blue line acts like an umbilical cord in the cabin view. You have restricted vision, and the wheel's jittering around as it tracks the camber and pitch of the track. Having







...I can't wait to roll some Veyrons with my friends"

"On the road again. I can't wait to get on the road again..."



"A cockpit that's a cross between a Nike running shoe and a Tour De France winner's helmet"

something in front of you telling you when it's time to brake helps enormously.

You're encouraged to use the whole track, and visual clues on more sensible tracks with easy curves and punchy straights tell you where you can absolutely go flat out, and where it's prudent to go easy. A stack of tyres hugging a break in the left wall on a medium right hander on the Tokyo R246 came spectacularly unstuck when we clipped it.

Moments like that teach you an important lesson: Gran Turismo is a mutually rewarding experience.

## MOMENTS OF LIGHT AND SHADE

A stack of tyres on the barricade is meant to stay intact, untouched by virtual metal. But seeing it destroyed brings more visual life into the racing experience. If you're willing to put effort into discovering what you should and shouldn't do and witnessing the effects then you're going to reap much more out of this.

There is a magnitude of options available to those who want to get into the finer details, but it's not demanded. Similarly, this digital representation of motorsport and cars has some of the most magnificent graphics we've ever seen, and the way light is displayed is really breathtaking. ▶

## THE WAITING GAME

A detailed explanation regarding why GT5 missed its November 2010 launch will likely never emerge. Taku Imasaki (GT5 producer for North America) offered these words in *The New York Times*:

"We're really close, but this was an executive decision that was made yesterday. Realistically, we thought we had a good date. We're not happy over here."

The issue has officially been blamed on production difficulties, although whether or these production difficulties stem from missing the production window itself (sources are reporting that Polyphony Digital allegedly missed an internal deadline by three days) or from under-estimating demand (retailers are reporting strong pre-orders) is unknown.

Our review copy of GT5 has not arrived at the time of going to print but we've been informed we should expect to have it near to, or slightly after, the time this issue goes on sale.

At any rate, Yamauchi has personally apologised to fans via Twitter: "Apologies for the delay. It's because time and labor were spent ironing the kinks out of a complex system. I'm really sorry. Everyone, it's inexcusable... Wait a little longer."





## X-1

One of the other recent revelations regarding *GT5* is that Polyphony Digital has teamed up with Adrian Newey, Red Bull Racing's renowned chief engineer, to create the X1 prototype -- a one-of-a-kind virtual race car.

In a 30-year career Newey has built championship and race-winning cars in F1 and Indycar. His designs for Williams and McLaren helped those teams dominate the 1990s, his STR3 for Scuderia Toro Rosso became the first car from the Red Bull stable to win a grand prix and his RB5 and RB6 have since made Red Bull Racing the team to beat in 2010.

The hook behind the X1 is all modern race cars, regardless of what series they participate in, are built to a set of rules and specification regulations. The concept behind the X1 is to push the boundaries of what's possible without the restrictions of any technical caps.

"Every race conforms to some sort of regulation, and every racing car is built to fit within those various regulations," explained Yamauchi. "However the X1 is something new, created from a 'what-if' dream. We want to inspire racing fans and the industry alike by exploring the realm of possibilities for the future of motorsports."

Mark Webber's hotheaded Red Bull teammate Sebastian Vettel took the X1 Prototype for a virtual shakedown around Suzuka in Japan. On his first lap the German beat the lap record -- set by Kimi Raikkonen in 2005 -- by more than 20 goddamned seconds.

We want.



"It's settled then. The horn will play *La Cucaracha*"

"I'm sorry, Dave. I can't let you turn on ABS and TCS"



Looks like The Emperor's Death Star digs



Notape deck? And while we're at it, where's my ashtray?





The sort of car you'd wash with your own saliva



He drove his Chevy to the levy but the levy was dry



Car design: they got it right 40 years ago. Pictured: proof



Hard to believe these guys also make the Tiida, isn't it?

Tokyo, again, has trees that loom at the sides of the track, and as the light filters through the leaves your car is covered in patchy shadows. In the cabin it's incredible to see this wash over the bonnet and inside the car, around the pillar and over the steering wheel.

This ballet of light and dark is more obvious on dirt tracks. The Italian Toscana layout is a beautiful gravel rollercoaster and, as it turns from day to night, your headlights come on to illuminate the dust kicked up by opposing vehicles. Citroen's C4 WRC car is the perfect machine for it. As we barrelled around the course we let go of the wheel to see what was happening as the tyres made contact.

Like the Nürburgring it was a violent experience. Touching the handbrake swung the back end out and it was a matter of balance making the front end point the way we were travelling. Switching to a Nissan GT-R we found that it was a stubborn pig, way too bloated, and needing a good amount of time to master on the dirt. Incredibly, the headlight patterns were markedly different to the C4, and switching to the camera trailing the car we saw the dust behind us glowing red off the tail lights.

This is a game of detail. It's why you've waited four years longer than was originally planned. And it's been tuned to run on your PS3.

"This game has some of the most **magnificent graphics** we have ever seen"

## WHEEL DEAL


Like we said earlier, *GT5* in a high-end steering set-up is the perfect way to play it. It's a reason to buy a wheel and use it. You can go through the entirety of *GT* without every using a Logitech device, but if you really want to explore everything available then we can't stress enough that the game's been built to accommodate comprehensive wheel support.

Hell, you can put it on a 3D TV. In cabin view it is truly glorious. It's not gimmicky and the subtle extra depth it adds makes for a stunning visual experience. You'll begin to see the on-screen hands as extensions of your own arms rather than a disembodied set of digital paws, emulating everything you're doing on your own wheel. Applying measured amounts of opposite lock each time the back of your car tries to overtake the front, squeezing the floppy paddle shifters – it's near 1:1.

That said, you don't need a wheel to enjoy the vast challenge of *GT5*. It's more than likely you won't use one. *GT5* has only one real aim and that's accurately recreating the feeling of driving a real car. A true simulation. That's where the joy comes from.

Driving is fun. Racing is fun. Check out a track day or go karting and tell us driving fast isn't invigorating.

*GT5* celebrates the joy of driving; the joy of driving fast and the joy of driving well. The game wants to make you feel confident behind the wheel.

It's been six years. What's one more month? 





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# in review



► GAME OF THE MONTH

## Fallout: New Vegas

What happens in New Vegas, stays in New Vegas

## Review ratings

**10 Incredible:** Perfection is relative and elusive, and no game will ever be *perfect*. Our 10 doesn't mean a game is flawless, it means a game has done everything it set out to do in an incredible fashion and thus it deserves our highest possible kudos.

**9 Excellent:** An outstanding game, either limited by its scope, sequel status (and lack of Improvement) or a few too many minor blemishes from being a 10. Likely one of the best in its genre, a 9 comes with very high praise.

**8 Great:** Still well ahead of the pack in most departments despite a few issues here and there. Thoroughly recommended.

**7 Good:** A robust package that does a solid job despite a handful of mild to moderate problems. Enjoyable in parts, just not fantastic overall.

**6 Decent:** This game will have some noticeable flaws that may make it hard to recommend to those who aren't fans of the genre, but it will do more right than it does wrong. Just.

**5 Mediocre:** A conceded pass, if you know what we mean. Half okay, but half-busted. Might scrape by for fans, but with the quality games we do have, there's no need to drop real money on a game that half sucks.

**4 Poor:** Anything below 5, strictly speaking, is a fail – but there are degrees of 'bad' just as there are degrees of 'good'. A 4 is unrefined, partially broken and poorly designed.

**3 Very disappointing:** Things start to go very wrong here – fundamentally flawed in many ways, boring and close to pointless.

**2 Terrible:** Nothing good here, and definitely not worth removing the wrapper.

**1 The worst:** Reserved for the very worst gaming could ever offer. A broken, offensive mess without a single redeeming quality. If a 10 is better than virtually every game available, a 1 is worse than virtually every game available. OPS has handed out this score only once.

## This Month

**70** Fallout:  
New Vegas

**72** DJ Hero 2

**73** Time Crisis:  
Razing Storm

**74** Castlevania:  
Lords of Shadow

**75** Shaun White  
Skateboarding

**75** John Daly's  
ProStroke Golf

**76** NBA 2K11

**77** The Sims 3

**77** SAW II:  
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**78** Vanquish

**79** The Fight:  
Lights Out

**79** The Shoot

**80** Spider-Man:  
Shattered  
Dimensions

**81** BlazBlue:  
Continuum Shift

**81** International  
Cricket 2010



▲ We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40" Sony Bravia for the best picture possible.





# Fallout: New Vegas

Stands with 17

**W**e don't envy Obsidian Entertainment. How can you possibly top a Game of the Year? With so much competition for the gaming dollar do you check the cards you have and play it safe or throw caution to the wind and hit on 17 with the dealer showing an ace? Both have their arguments. The safe bet guarantees your financial future but the windfall may not be that significant. Then again, you could bet the farm and go bust with nothing but the shirt on your back. Obsidian has played cautiously and there's a definite payoff – but it just hasn't broke the bank.

As *Fallout: New Vegas* commences, you're not in good shape. Out in the desert, late at night, you're about to succumb to an acute case of lead poisoning to the cranium, or so it would seem. Awakening in a mysterious surgery,

rescued by a security robot with its own agenda, you're patched up, given a pat on the back and set off into the wild, non-green yonder in search of fortune, glory and most importantly, payback. So the wheels are set in motion and now the game is afoot. Just be careful on your travels, because the house always wins in Vegas, new or old.

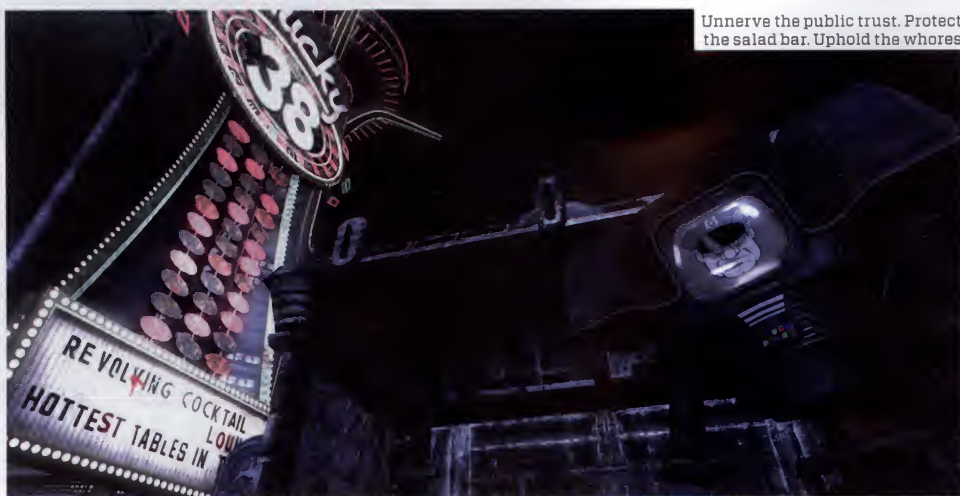
There's no denying that 2008 was *Fallout 3*'s year. It smashed the competition. Two years on, however, with major strides forward in the industry how well does a sequel to such a revered title stack up? We've got to say that, while the story and gameplay still stack up, the graphics have lost their edge and some annoyances have arisen.

For those of you who've never played *Fallout*, let us break it down. This is basic RPG

fare, with the player having the choice to switch between first and third-person views on the fly. You can engage enemies as you would in a typical first-person shooter or use the VATS system to slip into turn based attacks. In VATS, you target individual limbs with a percentile chance of hit displayed. Sometimes a headshot is not the best option. Take out a fast moving adversary's leg to slow them down or shoot a bandit's gun or the arm holding it. The reward is always a glorious slow motion cinematic kill cam that magnificently illustrates their body as it's torn limb from limb in a gooey bloody mess. This title is not for the squeamish.

You access VATS through your Pip-Boy, which acts as your menu. This is where you manage your inventory, quests and maps of the world. Not much has changed from *Fallout 3* and fans will instantly feel at home. The main quest sets you on the road but there are just so many distractions along the way and those that want to just knock out the main campaign and move on are doing themselves a great disservice. It's like having ADHD. You just manage to focus on one thing when you see something shiny glinting in the distance, and before you know it, boom, you're off running to see what it is. The depth really is staggering and has always been one of the franchise's finer points.

There have been a few neat tweaks worthy of mention. Workbenches now populate the land and can be used to fashion your own ammunition or medicine if you have the right skills and inventory. The speech option that helps you mould the adventure have also had an overhaul, with new options available if you have a high enough level of Barter, Speech, Science or Intelligence. Triumphant return from yon days of PC comes the faction system, where each organisation you encounter



Unnerve the public trust. Protect the salad bar. Uphold the whores



## Play this if you like

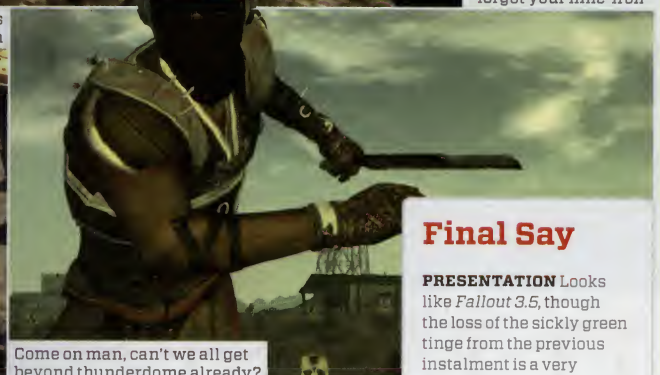
Fallout 3

### Info

**FORMAT:** PS3  
**GENRE:** ACTION RPG  
**RELEASE:** NOW  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** NAMCO  
**BANDAI PARTNERS**  
**DEVELOPER:** OBSIDIAN  
**ENTERTAINMENT**  
**PLAYERS:** 1  
**RRP:** \$109.95



Meet our character, Max. He's the Ayatollah of rock-and-roll-a



Come on man, can't we all get beyond thunderdome already?

"Hey Shooter, you forgot your nine-iron"

displays a certain disposition towards you. Favourable or reprehensible actions have consequences both ways and it's an entertaining juggling act to pick and choose whom to align yourself with.

The finest new addition is the deepening role of travelling partners via the Companion Wheel. Certain individuals will entreat you to take them along for the ride. Others will turn up out of nowhere, and some may watch your back after you complete a certain quest. Each new companion brings with them a bonus perk or skill, as well as a whole new pair of hands to carry valuables. We've encountered a few and highly recommend you acquire ex-Ranger Boone. He may be a man of few words, but he can shoot the wings off a fly at 200 yards and is harder than Chuck Norris' beard.

Specifically aimed at veterans comes Hardcore Mode. This is not for newbies or the faint of heart. Here, everything has to be considered. Your ammunition has weight and burdens your inventory, you need regular rest to stave off sleep deprivation, food and water are essential or you'll succumb to dehydration and a crippled limb

requires a visit to the doctor (or Doctor's Bag) rather than a simple dose with a stimpak. Enemies can also absorb more damage so choose wisely before you take a random on. You can always dial it back to regular mode but, once you do, Hardcore is lost for that game save.

There are a few niggles that have to be mentioned. Though improved since *Fallout 3* the graphics have only had a slight retouch. It's only marginally better-looking than *Fallout 3*. Also the first-person

view sometimes glitches when using two handed weapons and the Pip-Boy sporadically disappears when called up, wasting valuable seconds that can sometimes be the difference between a salvation stimpak or a one way trip to your last save. Each lessens immersion, which destroys what the series has always been about. As some of these were evident in *Fallout 3* we hope they're addressed before the arrival of the inevitable sequel. **Dave Kozicki**

## Goody little two shoes

One of the joys of playing *Fallout* is the freedom to tailor the experience to suit you. You fight how you want to fight - with bullets, lasers or hand-to-hand weapons - tackling each problem as you see fit. The obvious answer is not always the correct one. Morality is also at your discretion, although the series does subtly urge you to play nice. If you tend to favour evil you'll note how *Fallout: New Vegas* really makes you feel like a douche after indulging your inner devil. Every naughty thing you do is highlighted in red on screen and encouraged even the most despicable members of *OPS* to play the hero.

## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** Looks like *Fallout 3.5*, though the loss of the sickly green tinge from the previous instalment is a very welcome relief.

**SOUND** Tremendously atmospheric with each bullet fired, energy weapon discharge or explosion tearing through a ghoul resonating gloriously.

**CONTROLS** Identical to *Fallout 3* and once you get the handle of VATS and the menu, very intuitive.

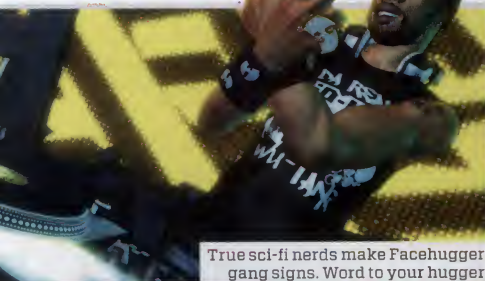
**REPLAY VALUE** Off the charts. There's so many distractions, arsenal options and morality shifts that you could replay *New Vegas* a dozen times and each would be a unique experience.

## Verdict

A wild ride, and worth the price of admission, but you've been on this one before.

8





True sci-fi nerds make Facehugger gang signs. Word to your hugger



"Look Ma, no hands!" Chickety check yourself, son

Pink shirts: and the ladies find these attractive... why now?

## Play this if you like

DJ Hero, Guitar Hero, Rock Band

### Info

**FORMAT:** PS3  
**GENRE:** MUSIC  
**RELEASE:** NOW  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** ACTIVISION  
**DEVELOPER:** FREESTYLE GAMES  
**PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**RRP:** \$89.95

# DJ Hero 2

Chords. Strings. We brings. Melody



When the first *DJ Hero* came out it spun us right 'round. Like a record, baby. Right, round. Round, round.

That said, it did scratch some people the wrong way too; in particular, actual DJs resented its simplified nature and the fact that the collector's edition didn't come packaged with enough free drugs to kill a small horse (thereby making the game an unauthentic representation of the subject matter). The good news is *DJ Hero 2* makes the original experience more technical, but not to the point of requiring a detox at the end of the campaign.

Most notable of the new mechanics is the revised freestyle button, which has been improved immeasurably by ditching the cheesy yeeeah boyeee's for samples co-opted from the two tracks you're actually mashing. There are also 'freestyle crossfade zones' (where you have greater control on a mix), some extra note types to consider and

'freestyle scratch zones' now give you the freedom to scratch up more richness than a fistfull of lottery tickets.

In addition to that, Freestyle Games has ditched guitar support in favour of a bit of karaoke – but the implementation feels sketchier than the glowstick weirdos attending your shows. The rapping works well enough but smooshing two disparate tracks together makes for a lyrical abomination and in order to sing one of these tone minefields will require either practice or a split-personality disorder. Let's face it, none of those options makes for a safe, 'pick-up-and-play' party environment.

But that's literally the only bad point we have about this sequel – other than the inclusion of Soulja Boy and the isolated defilement of both the Axel F theme and Metallica. The main campaign mode is way more coherent than the shotgun blast of menus that made up the original and the experience is kept fresher than a Bel-Air

prince thanks to extended mega-mixes, check point battles and real-life DJ showdowns. The team has also outdone themselves with some eyeball-scorchingly sharp venues and a camera system that could transfix an ADD child in a heartbeat.

As always, the music and the mixes make or break this package. The reuse of tracks is nowhere near as abusive this time around and, honestly, if you can't appreciate the overwhelming majority of tunes here then you're probably squarer than Spongebob. Drop these morbidly obese beats into some new multiplayer modes (that are actually worth playing this time), or let them run forever in the *GH5*-inspired jukebox mode to create one hell of a party apparatus.

*DJ Hero 2* offers worthy refinements on an already rock solid concept. It hasn't changed enough to win back the folks who disliked it the first time but hey, haters are gonna hate. **Adam Mathew**

## Final Say

### PRESENTATION

Enthralling camera work and much better NPC synching. Cleaner UI too.

**SOUND** Just looking at the tracklist doesn't do this justice. There are some really, *really* clever mash-ups here.

**CONTROLS** More of the same really. The new freestyle scratches feel wiggleda-wicked.

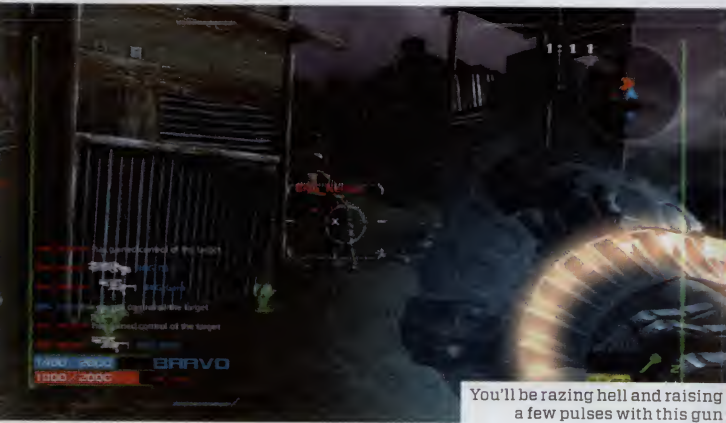
**REPLAY VALUE** Jukebox mode is worth the price of admission alone. Some serious DLC on the way too.

## Verdict

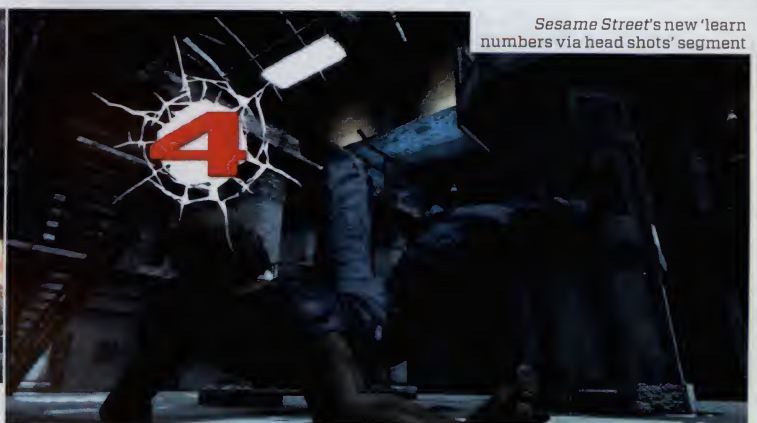
Improves upon the original in almost every way we wanted. The ultimate party accessory.

9





You'll be razing hell and raising a few pulses with this gun



Sesame Street's new 'learn numbers via head shots' segment

# Time Crisis: Razing Storm

Giving Move the trigger finger

For a true relic of the mid '90s the *Time Crisis* series still has an admirable amount of traction, at least when it comes to name recognition. *Time Crisis: Razing Storm* is the latest addition to Namco's elderly series and a relic it really is. Hide this in a cave and we guarantee Indiana Jones would be along to pinch it in two shakes of a lamb's tail.

*Time Crisis: Razing Storm*, known in Japan by the far more awesome moniker of *Big 3 Gun Shooting*, is a compilation of Namco light gun rail shooters. It's compatible with the Guncon 3, if you've got one, but it's being pushed more with the Move. The compilation contains three Namco arcade games: *Time Crisis: Razing Storm*, *Time Crisis 4* and the extremely wacky *Deadstorm Pirates*.

*Razing Storm* itself is a spin-off of the *Time Crisis* series and unfolds in a near future setting. It pits you against swarms of terrorists and mercenaries, plus their giant spider-like combat robots, in typical *Time Crisis* style gameplay. It's all quite simple and it's probably the least interesting of the three titles on offer here. It's entirely functional but it's bland looking overall and the voice-acting is a bit of a shit sandwich.

*Razing Storm* here comes in two shapes: the usual rail shooter and a separate mode where you move under your own steam, using the motion controller or the left stick of your standard pad. It takes a lot of effort to get used to. Aim towards the edge of the screen in any direction and you start turning in that direction. The issue we had was that on screen 'safe' zone that won't move the screen is too small. You'll go to aim at an enemy slightly to the left and suddenly you're turning instead, and your aim is absolutely ruined.

The onscreen results look like a blindfolded gamer is trying to make it through a shooter by receiving instructions from somebody else, tapped out in code on the back of their skull by a highly-trained parrot. The patience required to master the alien control system isn't rewarded with a particularly stunning experience either, so it's not worth the work.

*Time Crisis 4*, a re-release, is the same title you may have already played. Playing both this and *Razing Storm*, one after the other, we feel this is a superior title to the front-and-centre *Razing Storm*. The graphics are no better and the voice acting is similarly dire but the action itself is more interesting. You can chage weapons when you want, for starters. *Time Crisis* isn't exactly gaming's Hamlet, but *Razing Storm* is actually a lot more dumbed down than *Time Crisis 4*.

*Deadstorm Pirates* is the third game

and requires a big install. It's *Time Crisis* with pirates. Pirates armed with laser-targeting fully-automatic flintlock pistols. We'll let that description hang.

Light gun shooters are admittedly a great fit for the Move and it's hardly surprising that a *Time Crisis* title has hit Sony's new motion-controller in short order. The biggest problem is light guns have well and truly lost their ability to blow our trousers into next week. They lost that sometime late last century.

— Luke Reilly

Play this  
if you like

*Time Crisis 4*

Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: ACTION

RELEASE: NOW

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: NAMCO

PLAYERS: 1-2

RRP: \$79.95



And then the bastards threw green cordial in our eyes

## Continue?

The thing to keep on mind is that these are arcade games, through and through. These aren't five, eight or 10 hours experiences deliberately crafted for the home audience. These aren't games with well-measured pacing and detailed narratives to keep you hooked.

No. These are games Namco anticipate people will play for around six or so minutes before yanking out their tokens to trade for a stuffed panda and a set of giant novelty sunglasses. These games have one speed and one volume, fast and loud. They last around a half hour each, assuming you can survive that long.

## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** Very simple arcade-like graphics. Smooth but very basic stuff.

**SOUND** Blam, blam, blam. Oh, and the voice acting is absolutely terrible.

**CONTROLS** Simple light gun shooting. The separate first-person shooter hybrid is a nightmare though.

**REPLAY VALUE** Short, and suited to quick bursts, but you'll hardly return often. The shoot-the-prisoners-before-they-escape bonus mode is probably the best reason to return.

## Verdict

It is what it is. Nothing more, nothing less. Simple arcade blasting.

6



Ker-ack that whip!  
Give the past the slip

Play this if  
you like

God of War III

### Info

FORMAT: PS3

GENRE: ACTION

ADVENTURE

RELEASE: NOW

DISTRIBUTOR:

MINDSCAPE

DEVELOPER: MERCURY

STEAM

PLAYERS: 1

RRP: \$109.95

# Castlevania: Lords of Shadow

Get bitten, stay smitten

Forget what you think you know about the unholy union that was '3D' and 'the Castlevania series'. That blasphemy has been corrected thanks to *Castlevania: Lords of Shadow*, all sins are now forgiven. All you really need to know is that you are Gabriel, a holy warrior who wants to know why God is just letting mankind be a smorgasbord for werewolves and vampires. Short answer: we're delicious.

This tale is narrated by the sultry tones of Patrick Stewart (a man who can read a phone book and make us listen raptly), but he isn't the only selling point. The plot is, in fact, enthralling. It features a number of fascinating plot twists and is extremely well voiced by actors who project none of the Japanese effeminacy typically associated with characters in this series. Sure, your protagonist's name is *Gabriel*, but given his rugged looks, Scottish accent and penchant for death he could just as easily be named Fabio McKillslaughter.

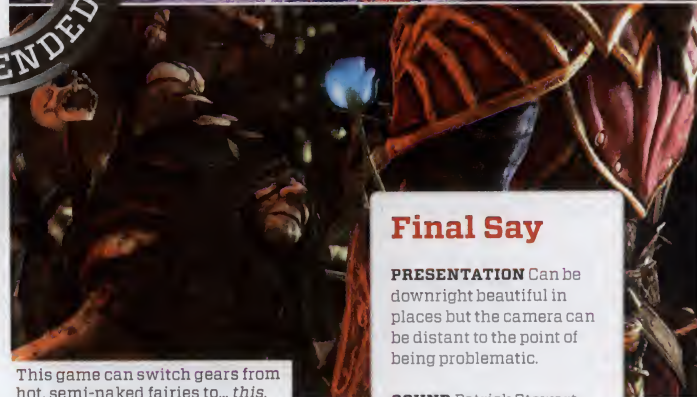
If you break this down into its basic ingredients, *Castlevania* is comprised of

*God of War* fighting, *Uncharted* platforming and puzzling, and boss fights ripped straight out of *Shadow of the Colossus*. As a concoction, that's some impressive parentage and, while Mercury Steam has successfully managed to leech the winning formula from each of these progenitors, we think there is more than enough originality layered through this game to make it a hybrid unto itself.

One of the best additions is a magic system that allows you to siphon neutral orbs harvested from your foes into either 'light' or 'shadow' magic banks located on L3 and R3 respectively. Toggling one of these two magics offers you very different benefits in combat (light = health recuperation, shadow = stopping power) and to prevent spamming, you can't suck up more orbs when either magic is active.

Couple that mechanic with an extremely robust combo system, secondary weapons and evasive moves and you have a fisticuffs formula that feels more tactical

Gabriel doesn't look quite as shocked as the other guy



This game can switch gears from hot, semi-naked fairies to... this.

and rewarding than most action games of *Castlevania*'s ilk.

Another big differentiator is the way your journey unfolds. The emphasis here is on short, rapid-fire levels where the environments and gameplay tasks required of you are ever-changing. Other than the placing of a boss fight at the end of a chapter the campaign follows no discernable pattern – you could spend the next bite-sized level purely on spelunking, killing from horseback, solving a logic puzzle, collecting trinkets to pass barriers or eviscerating the hordes (or any combination of these). You really won't know what is coming next, and we have to say the utter lack of telegraphing makes for an unorthodox, riveting ride.

While the fixed-camera isn't always your friend and the platforming relies too much on trial-and-error death, this is still one hell of a tight package. Give *Castlevania: Lords of Shadow* a chance to sink its fangs into you and you'll be surprised about how exquisite and long-lasting its embrace can be.

Adam Mathew

## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** Can be downright beautiful in places but the camera can be distant to the point of being problematic.

**SOUND** Patrick Stewart can narrate our lives. There are other big name actors in this too and they put in fantastic performances

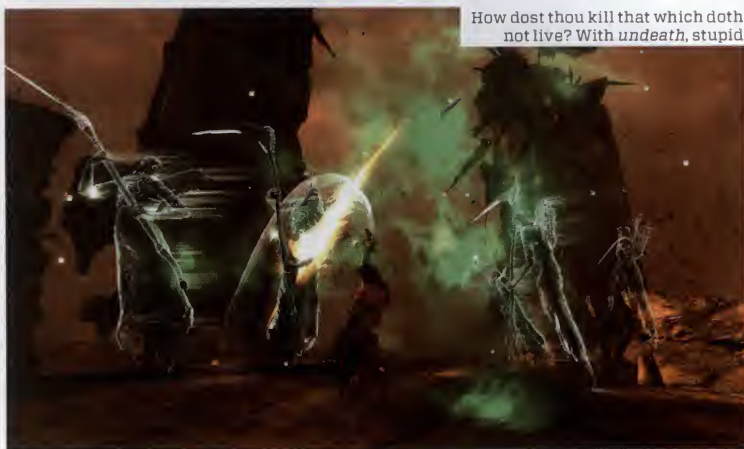
**CONTROLS** A very well-considered fighting and magic system. There are some minor issues with the semi-auto climbing controls.

**REPLAY VALUE** Every level can be replayed whenever you want for more trinkets and XP milking. Meaningful DLC is on the way too.

## Verdict

One of the most surprisingly awesome titles of this year. Great for fans and newcomers alike.

9



How dost thou kill that which doth not live? With *undeath*, stupid



# Shaun White Skateboarding

More of a bogus journey than an excellent adventure

Taking elements from ancient Dreamcast title *Jet Set Radio*, *Tony Hawk* and *Skate*, *Shaun White Skateboarding* blends these luminaries together and comes up with this quasi skate game. While you do ride a board and bust out a recognisable repertoire of grinds, grabs and stalls, this is equal parts skating, adventure and storytelling.

The city you ride around in is under the control of The Ministry. They are the thought police and want everyone to conform. You're

tasked with bringing colour back into the world by skating, and also releasing public nuisance number 1, Shaun White, from their grasp.

While the concept is unique, even if it does borrow from some of the best skate titles around, this isn't a hugely compelling game. Your skater rarely has enough forward momentum, so you're often nipping back to a half pipe or linked verts to get your speed up.

Plus it's not really about skating, it's about exploring. Linking moves together is important for building your 'influence' meter – the thing that determines what you can change in the world – and you often have to get to high ground to complete challenges. The most intriguing mechanic to do this is by 'shaping' rails and verts. Instead of following a predetermined path you must take them and mould them so that you go where you want.

Even with this kooky system *Shaun White Skateboarding* just feels a bit limp. The skating itself is competent but not tactile, and trekking back to a skate shop, rather than just an in-game menu, to buy moves wears thin after a short while.

Kudos for finding a way of distinguishing the game from its competitors, but *Skate 2* is still chairman of the board. **Paul Taylor**

Play this if you like

*Skate*, *Tony Hawk's Project 8*



This game grinds in places [dad joke #391]

## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** Smooth but lacking detail or crunch.

**SOUND** Excellent soundtrack though effects lack atmosphere.

**CONTROLS** Not quite responsive enough, but rail shaping's cool.

**REPLAY VALUE** Loads of mini-challenges to complete.

## Verdict

The crux of the game – the skating – is pretty bland. It gets points for creativity but *Shaun White* flunks the fun test.

6

# John Daly's ProStroke Golf

It's all in the hips



Your ball is now in: Carpark. Play again? You have selected: No

We had hoped *John Daly's ProStroke Golf* would be a refreshing change of pace from *Tiger Woods PGA Tour*. Woods' private life may not be, but his game series is clean and utterly professional. A robust golf game with John Daly's anti-country club attitude could've been something. Unfortunately this game isn't what we'd hoped for.

The drab graphics and dead commentary instantly turned us off. The only real reason to persist at all with *John Daly's ProStroke Golf*

is the impressive swing mechanic utilising the Move motion controller.

The game's use of the Move controller is one of the best so far. Simply place a ball, or a rogue Dorito, or whatever, on the ground and aim at it with the Move controller. 'Strike' the imaginary 'ball' and you're away. It's nice and simple but you can make fine adjustments via subtle twists of your wrist, which you'll see translated onscreen. The Move also detects the power you're putting into each shot too so whack it hard off the tee and control your swing when making shorter approach shots.

You can still play the game with a DualShock but you'd have to be hide-the-cutlery retarded to choose it over the likes of any *Tiger Woods PGA Tour* title from the last, say, 10 years. The *Tiger Woods* series has had great analogue controls for years. The Move controls are this game's only real redeeming feature. The feature set is light to say the least.

*John Daly's ProStroke Golf* is a great example of how to use the Move controller effectively in a golf game but, unfortunately, that's all it is. The overall presentation is pretty dire and it's got no spark. Daly's been on the wagon since July this year but that doesn't mean you can't still have a little fun. We've seen the guy tee off from a beer can. We're talking about a man who has admitted the only reason he doesn't lift weights is because his health club doesn't let him smoke there. As it stands *ProStroke Golf* is about as sedate as a sloth on a triple course of tranquilisers.

It's almost certainly simply a budget issue, but the only indulgence the team has allowed themselves to wedge into the game is a collection of pants so ugly you wouldn't use them to clean up a crime scene.

Can somebody just adapt *Caddyshack* into a golf game? That ought to do it. **Luke Reilly**

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3

**GENRE:** SPORTS

**RELEASE:** NOW

**DISTRIBUTOR:** TUFF KAT

**DEVELOPER:** GUSTO

GAMES

**PLAYERS:** 1-4

**RRP:** \$99.95

## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** A dud. Not great to look at and lacking any personality.

**SOUND** The commentary might as well be absent.

**CONTROLS** Fantastic swing controls using the Move. Well done.

**REPLAY VALUE** You'll most probably just play this game once.

## Verdict

Those looking for a full-featured, high production value golf title will need to give this the shaft. Just go play real golf.

5

Play this if you like

*John Daly*, pants so goofy you'd have to kick your own arse



This play is so exciting  
the crowd is ignoring it



**Info**  
**FORMAT:** PS3  
**GENRE:** SPORTS  
**RELEASE:** NOW  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** 2K  
**DEVELOPER:** VISUAL  
 CONCEPTS / KUSH  
 GAMES  
**PLAYERS:** 1-7 (2-10  
 ONLINE)  
**RRP:** \$99.95



# NBA 2K11

Be Like Mike

**C**lad in brown pigskin robes and crowned with an aura of neon logos, you are His Airness, Michael Jordan. Slipping into his royal brand of boots has been a long time coming. Yet, with such a universally appealing feature, it's ironic *NBA 2K11* is set to be one of the most polarising sports titles ever.

Fortunately, at least, Jordan's appearance has been integrated with bitchin' aplomb. *NBA 2K11* features all his classic Bulls teams along with the ability to replay his biggest games and mime his extraordinary feats. Complete these tests and the space-time continuum does a hop skip, allowing players to draft Jordan as a rookie in today's NBA competition.

Yet *2K11* is far more than a temple for Jordanites. It features massive changes to on-court play that have driven the game towards technical exhaustion. It's here *NBA 2K11* is set to divide.

*2K11* gives players an uncanny level of control over how they approach the basket, shoot, and run plays but it's offset against a defense that could shut down a mother's love. The sacred MacGuffin 2K has been striding towards here is realism. To that end, players who have Miami Heat pyjamas, draw plays on their fridge, and think an unwashed Kobe Bryant jersey "smells fine" will be in nirvana.

Commands for stuff abound. Commands to hesitate while dribbling, do a left-side layup, do a Euro layup, spin back from the board and shoot, do a hook shot out of the left hand, do a hook shot out of the right. The canned animations from 2K's heritage are out, replaced by a moves list that rivals *Tekken*'s.

This complexity is also its greatest weakness. *NBA 2K11* can, at times, be



excruciatingly difficult. The prime culprit is a daft and floaty passing system that results in too many intercepts. Almost admitting the problem, 2K have provided an option called Total Control Passing which gives players control over off-ball receivers, but it's far too fiddly to be used during quick plays – where needed most. Add team AI that's often flatfooted unless they're running a play, and you have a tough bucket to nail.

To counter these setbacks – and they can be countered – players must dive into the game's nuances. Hardcore lovers of the sport will relish the challenge, enjoy every throttling by the AI, and take their skills online.

But there'll only be so many times basketball punters will endure this level of difficulty without reverting to Tourette-like hysterics.

So yes, it's complex. And yes, the experience oscillates between sublime and diabolical between each game, but basketball is a complex sport. With such unparalleled presentation and unapologetic gameplay, this is likely the best basketball game ever. But along with the skill of Jordan, you'll need the patience of Job to experience it at its best. **James Ellis**

## Like to Move it?

Break out the Move controllers – *NBA 2K11* welcomes flailing your body parts about in its Blacktop dunk competition. Here keen players can use the Move controller to grab a ball and launch into some mid-air gesticulation before slamming one home. Amazingly the Move is also supported in general play.

Yes, it's bloody awkward. Yes, it feels tacked on. Don't act surprised. It's worth a pat on the back for the attempt. Roll on *2K12*.

## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** Throw this on a big public screen and wait for oodles of court tramps to crack on to the players. Oh yeah, 3D TV owners will be able to play it in the third dimension.

**SOUND** Hard American accents deliver the most varied and idiosyncratic bundle of game commentary ever recorded.

**CONTROLS** As difficult to master as it is intricate. Be prepared to dive into its complexity or lose. Badly.

**REPLAY VALUE** Play an MJ Challenge, guide an Association, foster a career, throw down in street-ball, do a dunk contest..

## Verdict

Hard court high priest Michael Jordan has combined with *2K11*'s visual pomp for, perhaps, the best basketball game ever.

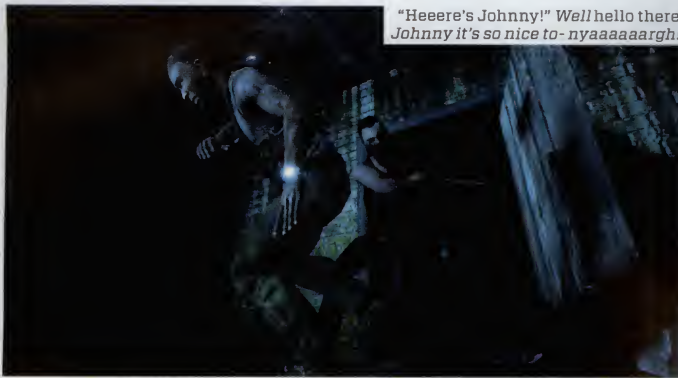
9

Play this  
if you liked

NBA 2K10







# SAW II: Flesh & Blood

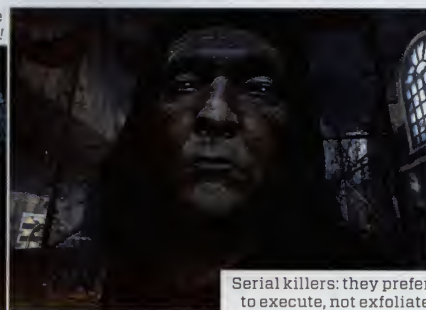
It's a TRAP!

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3  
**GENRE:** ADVENTURE  
**RELEASE:**  
**DISTRIBUTOR:**  
MINDSCAPE  
**DEVELOPER:** ZOMBIE  
INC.  
**PLAYERS:** 1  
**RRP:** \$99.95

Though Konami makes you pay for the price of a seat with *SAW II*, you'll only ever need the edge of it. Waking up in Jigsaw's lair without much preamble, you must escape from some traps and then every choice you make from then on comes with its own grisly consequence. Playing as Michael, the estranged son of the first game's protagonist, your goal is to both track down your father's killer and to interpret the clues that'll allow you to escape this bat-shit insane asylum.

At its most basic level you're looking at a survival horror title, crossed with *Myst* and



Serial killers: they prefer to execute, not exfoliate

sprinkled with gruesome insta-death quicktime events. As a sequel *SAW II* does improve upon its predecessor in some areas; the atmosphere and presentation of the game is spot on, the puzzle-orientated moments are challenging and suitably gory and the adventure no longer coops you up in one single environment. Even still, when it comes to the real physicality of the game (like dodging psychos or popping someone in the chops) the game relies too much on quicktime events and the AI's clunkier than designer beartrap headwear.

Fans of the original will be happy to know that witnessing the multiple endings requires skilful replaying of the game (as opposed to just reloading the end scene), and there is a lot of *SAW* lore to be uncovered via collectible puppets that are secreted away behind even more nefarious tests of lateral thinking. As a cerebral challenge *SAW II* is refreshing, fares noticeably better than the rushed original and is bloodier than an abattoir killing floor. That said, if you buy it expecting action that feels as visceral as the subject matter, you'll soon feel trapped with no way out. **A Adam Mathew**

Play this  
if you like

SAW

## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** The jump up to the latest Unreal engine makes this prettier, the animations look iffy.

**SOUND** Genuinely spooky atmosphere that can be spoiled by the odd rookie voice actor (not Tobin Bell).

**CONTROLS** Bloody awful combat that lacks features and finesse. Traversal and puzzle controls are okay.

## REPLAY VALUE

Collectibles and multiple endings ahoy.

## Verdict

If puzzles  
are your bag,  
have at it.  
If you want  
action, avoid.

6

# The Sims 3

Frivolous freeform fun for fans

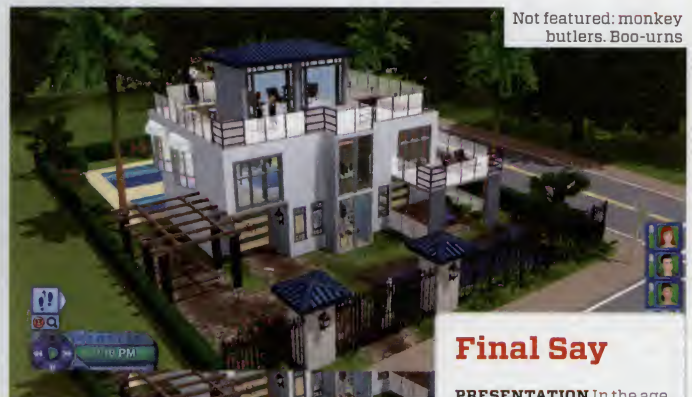
Play this  
if you like

The Urbz

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3  
**GENRE:** STRATEGY  
**RELEASE:** NOW  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** EA  
**DEVELOPER:** THE SIMS  
STUDIO  
**PLAYERS:** 1  
**RRP:** \$109.95

Spontaneous combustion:  
hilarious if it isn't you



Not featured: monkey butlers. Boo-urns

If you've never played a *Sims* game before, one look at the boggle of in-game menus and you'll be lost like a fart in a Jacuzzi. Basics such as working out which character is selected and which isn't can be confusing and gameplay tutorials teach frustratingly little. However, once chewed, this mouthful can actually become rather appetising.

Character creation is enjoyable and you can assign all sorts of personality quirks, everything from neurotic snobbishness to evil megalomania. You'll get magically attached to your Sims in next to no time.

Gameplay is largely freeform and seems to be mainly split between Sim interaction and managing your Sims' moods.

However, interactions are limited and we can't help being a little disappointed in not being able to recreate an episode of *Jerry Springer*. Insulting a Sim's face, for example, results in little more than lowered mood, which doesn't appear to have any consequences. Neither does trying steal the neighbour's wife.

Despite being potentially addictive with some real curveball humour, the game stalls once you begin wondering what else there is to do.

Fans of freeform, management-style games would love *The Sims 3* and we belatedly welcome the all-conquering PC heavy-hitter to PS3. Still, the more goal-and-action-oriented gamer might get a little bored here. **A Petr Jura**



## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** In the age of modern graphics this is somewhat Precambrian. However there are enough aesthetics to give a grudging pass.

**SOUND** Ambient only. You could probably turn it off entirely.

**CONTROLS** Tolerable, provided you can navigate the on-screen labyrinth.

**REPLAY VALUE** Spending time with your family will quickly begin to mean ignoring your real one.

## Verdict

Waiting to  
pounce on  
the right type  
of gamer.

7



Robots, with frickin' laser beams attached to their heads

## Why are they fighting, mummy?

In the very near future, the US solves their energy needs with a deep space solar-powered generator. Unfortunately, Russian ultra-nationalists have seized control of it, turning it into a massive laser. First they fry up San Francisco, and now they're aiming it at the rest of the future West. You're up, kid.

Play this if you like

Bayonetta

### Info

**FORMAT:** PS3  
**GENRE:** ACTION  
**RELEASE:** NOW  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** SEGA  
**DEVELOPER:** PLATINUM GAMES  
**PLAYERS:** 1  
**RRP:** \$99.95

In communist space, robots defrag your CPU

# Vanquish

Dance fighting kicked up a notch

Capcom alumni Shinji Mikami might be best-known for giving us the *Resident Evil* series but the gold-medal designer has steadily been exhibiting quite the fondness for hyper-kinetic Japanese-brand lunacy.

*Vanquish* has to be seen in action to be believed. A super-mobile third-person arcade shooter it is incredibly over-the-top, astonishingly hard even on 'Casual' difficulty (there's even a further diluted 'Casual Auto' setting underneath that!) and intrinsically Japanese. It's the kind of manic and unforgiving gameplay our fleet-fingered Far Eastern gaming cousins love and assumes no small amount of facility on the part of anyone who picks it up. The learning curve isn't just steep; it's non-existent. For most of you, gamer's pride will not allow you to start your first game of *Vanquish* on anything but 'Normal' difficulty. By the very first boss fight – an ordeal equal in both scope and difficulty to most end-game boss fights seen in Western-made action games – you'll swiftly be dialling it down to 'Casual' after dying about 10 times in as many minutes.

It's not unlike Mikami's underrated carnival of brutality *God Hand*, from 2006. That title may not have been very well-received (or even understood, but anyone who's ever seen *Fist of the North Star* and embraced it like a cute fat cat), but it certainly sowed the seeds of unabashed mayhem that have given life to *Vanquish*.

*Vanquish* is an inspired game; inspired enough that it can wear its

influences proudly on its sleeve without taking an inch away from itself. Hideo Kojima's *Metal Gear Solid* series receives no end of in-game homage, from the impromptu Codec-esque chats to the grizzled never-say-die tones of our hero Sam Gideon (there's even a really comical 'grizzle off' early on between him and Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Burns right at the start there) to the fact that, when you're in cover, tapping **LB** will even trigger an immediate cigarette break. Even the Augmented Reaction Suit Sam wears is straight out of Raiden's *Guns of the Patriots* clothing warehouse, said suit being home to some of the most fun you'll ever have by squashing the disco slide button: The Boost!

Neee-own, indeed.

And this is how real men part their hair



The gameplay, however, is the complete antithesis of Snake and co.'s cautionary advance. Turbo-boosting all over the place, whipping seamlessly into cover and firing a salvo of deadly, slow-motion rounds into the endless waves of increasingly vicious (not to mention clever – watch your flanks) enemy mechanoids. There's really been nothing else quite like it this generation, which makes comparison difficult, and its one misstep is the fact that its only online component is a paltry ranking system. In truth, having multiplayer inside the chaotic sphere of *Vanquish* would have made Mikami's latest baby the prodigal son of third-person shooters. There's always next time though.

**Toby McCasker**

## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** This is quick, slick and often a veritable bullet-hell. Full of those small touches that we love. Cigarette flick distractions? Cool.

**SOUND** Cheeseball, overly gruff heroes and over-the-top commie antagonists. If you dig caricatures, you'll love this.

**CONTROLS** It takes a bit to get your head around the slide system but once it gels you'll feel like greased lightning.

**REPLAY VALUE** The lack of multiplayer is a bit of a downer but there are online score attacks to consider.

## Verdict

Should come with a disclaimer on the box. Whip-quick third-person thrills that are most definitely not for the faint of heart. Play it now.

8



# The Fight: Lights Out

Take it outside

Unlike most of the launch titles accompanying Move at, or close to, launch *The Fight: Lights Out* isn't being pitched as a family-friendly experience. It's a mature title and it's being marketed as such. This is pretty clear from the outset when cult movie icon Danny Trejo suddenly appears and starts barking orders at us.

The tutorial is hugely entertaining. It's mostly because it's funny watching Trejo wave around a pair of Move controllers but, to be fair, Trejo has done a far better job here than his paycheque probably demanded. Why is he here, gruffing it up? While serving time in San Quentin State Prison (before he became an actor) he was actually the California state prison champion in both the lightweight and welterweight divisions. That's why.

It's a shame, then, that after such a promising start things start to derail a little.

The Move's motion sensing abilities allow for a responsive experience but it never feels like a particularly accurate one. With a Move motion controller in each hand you can throw virtual jabs, hooks and uppercuts – plus special strikes like hammer blows and headbutts – at your onscreen opponent. *The Fight* does its best to try and translate your flailing and emulate it on screen but it just doesn't seem fast enough.

**Play this if you like**

Bar fights

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3

**GENRE:** SPORTS

**RELEASE:** NOW

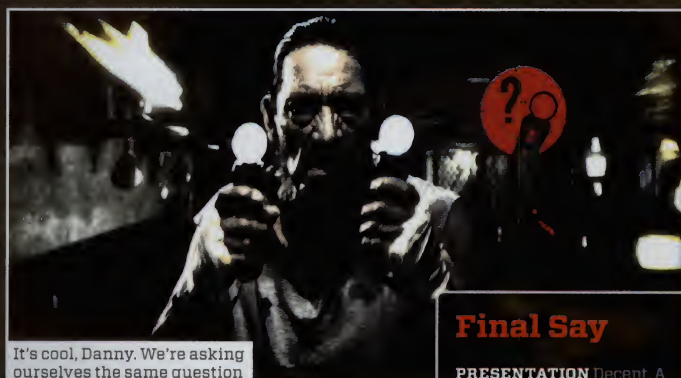
**DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY

**DEVELOPER:** COLDWOOD

**INTERACTIVE**

**PLAYERS:** 1-2

**RRP:** \$59.95



It's cool, Danny. We're asking ourselves the same question

Unfortunately we just found the system makes the fighting itself feel quite alien and unsettling. It's that feeling of only partial control you get when you're reaching in from behind someone and using their own arms to teach them perform a task, combined with those dreams you occasionally have where your punches are all weak and flaccid despite the fact you feel like you're putting enough energy behind them to punch the rings off Saturn.

It's odd too that your character's stamina and speed, for instance, are dictated by in-game stats rather than your own abilities. For a game based on physical performance we don't quite understand why in-game punches can't be as fast as you can actually throw them, or why our in-game character's arms can get tired before ours do.

*The Fight* is a valuable example of the kinds of non-casual fare we can expect for Move over the months and years to come. As it stands though it just doesn't feel near as organic as we'd hoped it would. **— Luke Reilly**

## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** Decent. A grown-up, gritty look with great-looking tutorials.

**SOUND** Fairly forgettable apparently as we don't recall anything of note.

**CONTROLS** Not quite there. You'll feel like you're just wildly punch-dancing to little effect.

**REPLAY VALUE** We don't want to play it anymore.

## Verdict

You'll fight more with the controls than you onscreen opponent. You'll adapt to them eventually but it's still not that fun.

**5**

Hey, did anyone else shed a tear during *The Iron Giant*? No? Pffft, we totally didn't either



# The Shoot

Light guns, cameras, action

**Play this if you like**

*Point Blank*, *Time Crisis*, those rigged shooting games at the Easter Show

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3

**GENRE:** PARTY

**RELEASE:** NOW

**DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY

**DEVELOPER:** COHORT

**STUDIOS**

**PLAYERS:** 1-2

**RRP:** \$59.95

Blending the aesthetics of old sideshow alley-style shooting galleries with a pop-up firing range approach, *The Shoot* is probably one of the more straightforward Move titles. It's also one of the better ones (although compared to the likes of *Kung Fu Rider* that's not exactly a huge compliment).



We do our killin' before breakfast

A standard light gun shooter, each of *The Shoot*'s five levels is a different film set. One may be Western-themed, another may be sci-fi themed. You're only fighting against wooden cutouts and other non-human targets (which is how we imagine the game secured its family-friendly PG rating) but some of them will fight back if you don't take them out quick enough.

The zombie targets are probably our favourite. Even though they're made of wood only a headshot will stop them from closing in on you. Shots to the body will splinter parts of the target away but a bullet in the bonce is the only way to put one down permanently.

Get struck too many times, or hit too many "civilian" targets, and the director will do his nut and demand you lose a take and start over (you can dodge projectiles by thrusting the motion controller left or right). You need to keep the director happy by successfully taking down enemy targets and chaining together combos.

These combos unlock special moves like the ability to slow down time, instantly clear a screen of targets with a quick shockwave or give you fully automatic fire for a limited time. The way you activate these is spinning around on the spot, firing into the ground or firing into the sky. The first mechanic is pretty naff (you can spin your Move controller over your head like a lasso instead but it doesn't always work) but the other two seem fine.

You'll burn through each movie pretty fast; there are only a few hours of gameplay here. The levels are designed with unlockables in mind to prompt multiple playthroughs. If you get sucked into high scores you'll likely want to give it a few goes to try and boost it.

Better than we'd expected but not as good as it could have been. There's nothing really wrong with the final product itself but it just lacks any real staying power. **— Luke Reilly**

## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** It's got more personality and charm than *Time Crisis*.

**SOUND** Basic. The repetitive voiceovers grate too.

**CONTROLS** The shooting seems tight and accurate. All you can ask for really.

**REPLAY VALUE** A few sessions and the novelty will wear thin.

## Verdict

Probably the better of the rail shooters this month. The shooting gallery vibe is better at encouraging multiple attempts.

**6**



The world's most elaborate double high-five was destined for trouble

# Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions

Spidey senses are disappointed

What a calamity. Spider-Man's broken a mystical tablet into a dozen pieces whilst chasing villain Mysterio through a museum and the shards have scattered themselves across four different dimensions. Madame Web, psychic, do-gooder and guiding hand, shows up to corral four Spideys in to retrieve the pieces in this crippled, repetitive and often frustrating title. A calamity indeed.

It has a great premise as you take charge of a quartet of web-slingers across the Amazing, Ultimate, Noir and 2099 universes, each promising different abilities and styles. In truth, Amazing, Ultimate and 2099 are all riffs of the same tune with slightly altered powers between them. Ultimate has his heavy-hitting 'rage' ability, 2099 slows down time, and Amazing, well, doesn't really have anything.

The Noir universe does something unique with a heavy emphasis on stealth and very little on toe-to-toe combat, but the stages across all universes roughly follow the same pattern. You'll be taunted by the boss and exchange blows, then fight goons, fight the boss before he runs away, goons, boss, goons and save civilians, boss fight where they use the power of the tablet fragment, win. Repeat for success.

It's strictly a linear title, with the odd nook and cranny for finding collectibles. As you pick up hidden spiders or complete challenges – break X amount of pillars during a boss fight, or whack Y number of chumps using a particular move – you'll earn points to upgrade each character, like better combos, a bigger health bar or faster skill regeneration.

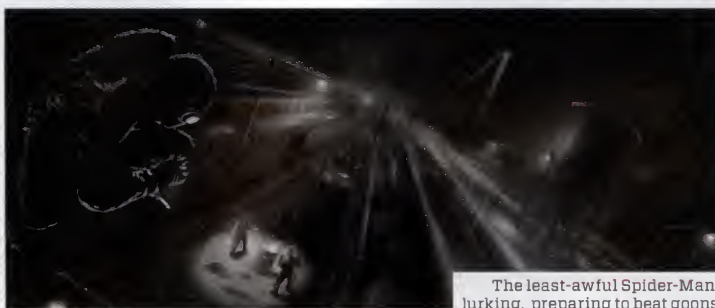
What it doesn't improve though is

Spider-Man's painful one-liners. Each dimension's Spidey has a different voice actor to distinguish him from the others, but the script is woeful and the lame taunts delivered by both he and the bosses quickly grate. We never realised Spider-Man could be such a whiny, sarcastic and unlikable twerp. His quips are often repeated within a few seconds of each other; a superficial complaint when you realise that there's much more to loathe below the surface.

Though your moves become bigger, faster, flashier, you'll rarely feel like Spider-Man. We've often thought of him as being a fluid, dynamic character and in *Shattered Dimensions* he's anything but, as he gets

'stuck' for a moment when transitioning onto a wall from the ground, or not being able to stick to certain objects. Not all surfaces can be clambered, and forget about web swinging and leaping onto a wall in one motion. Also, why have we gone back to swinging from invisible hooks in the sky? Hadn't we done away with that?

Looking at the screenshots you'd wonder how a game with such life and visual zest turns out this way. We love the art style but that's about as much praise as we can give this. *Spider-Man 2* made you feel like Spider-Man. This contains none of that same freedom. **Paul Taylor**



The least-awful Spider-Man, lurking, preparing to beat goons

## BLACK AND WHITE

We liked the Noir parts of *Shattered Dimensions* the most, but even then that's kinda like saying you like being punched in the face rather than punched in the neck. Still, as you slip in and out of the shadows in these levels the graphics change to let you know when you're going to be spotted by the guards. Very smart. Pity about the rest of the game.

## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** Bold, beautiful graphics, though Spider-Man's animations sometimes look they're missing a few frames.

**SOUND** Repetitive sound bites and cheesy, one-liners that will have you cringing.

**CONTROLS** "No, not that way! No, wait, don't pick that up! Why won't you climb? Why is the camera doing that?" etc.

**REPLAY VALUE** You probably won't hit all the challenges within the levels, but there's not much point going back to get them all done.

## Verdict

Where it should provide variety and freedom it gives only repetitive-ness and closed-in areas. A step backwards.

5

Play this if you like

*Spider-Man: Web of Shadows*

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3

**GENRE:** ACTION

**RELEASE:** NOW

**DISTRIBUTOR:** ACTIVISION

**DEVELOPER:** BEENOX

**PLAYERS:** 1

**RRP:** \$79.95



# BlazBlue: Continuum Shift

Delivers a dragon punch of its own

**Play this if you like**

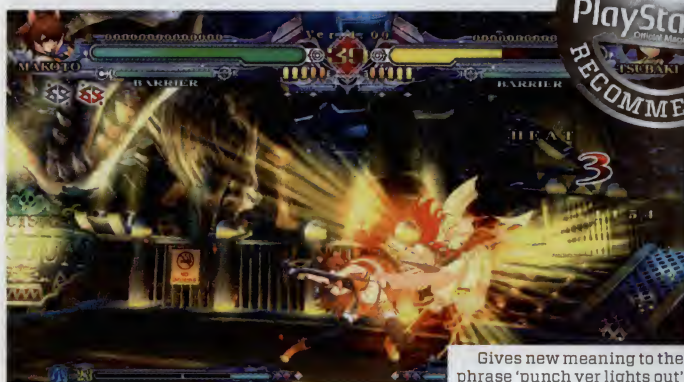
*BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger*  
*Super Street Fighter IV*

## Info

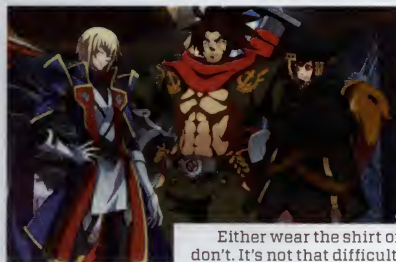
**FORMAT:** PS3  
**GENRE:** FIGHTING  
**RELEASE:** NOW  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** AIE  
**DEVELOPER:** ARC  
SYSTEM WORKS  
**PLAYERS:** 1-2  
**RRP:** \$69.95

It wasn't that long ago we reviewed *BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger* and raved over it. Did you buy it, fighting fans? You should've, but you probably didn't. It fused together beautiful 2D characters and outlandish moves that provided a real alternative to the chess-manoevres of *Street Fighter IV*.

This update (really, it's a sequel only to the oddball Story mode) does a better job of easing newcomers into the fold. The tutorial mode explains the systems and gauges used throughout the game so you can go here and learn the basics before taking it online. There's a Challenge mode as well, so if you're really looking for a way to hone your skills this is it.



Gives new meaning to the phrase 'punch yer lights out'



Either wear the shirt or don't. It's not that difficult.

It's more than a game for newcomers though. The systems themselves have been tweaked – the amount of Bursts has been culled from one per round to two for an entire match, for example – and there are three new characters.

The number pales compared to Capcom's releases, but unlike *Super Street Fighter IV* each character here is truly unique; no two fighters are the same as each other so you're guaranteed of an interesting battle, and also longevity.

This just feels like a better game all round, and while it feels great it's not for everyone. The flavour is distinctly Japanese, so if you've weened yourself on countless anime and manga, and don't mind some English, then *Continuum Shift* should be on your shelf right now. To everyone else we say, like last time, give it a go. You might just surprise yourself. Again. **Paul Taylor**

## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** Beautiful characters, crazy backgrounds, and great production values.

**SOUND** Apart from the ring announcer the voice acting is superb.

**CONTROLS** The simplified control scheme for newcomers is ace.

**REPLAY VALUE** Near endless thanks to character balancing.

## Verdict

If you're tired of or too familiar with the usual brawlers you're mad not to have a few rounds.

9

# International Cricket 2010

Got him, yes!

**Play this if you like**

*Ashes Cricket 2009*

## Info

**FORMAT:** PS3  
**GENRE:** SPORTS  
**RELEASE:** NOW  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** NAMCO  
BANDAI PARTNERS  
**DEVELOPER:**  
TRICKSTAR GAMES  
**PLAYERS:** 1-4  
**RRP:** \$99.95

At the time of going to print Australia has just lost its third test on the trot. We haven't lost three tests in a row for over 20 years. There's not a great deal you or we can do about it but we can ease the pain by winning a few of our own in *International Cricket 2010*.

A noticeable improvement from last year's version, *International Cricket 2010*'s biggest and best added feature is its new camera. The default camera is now perched down on the pitch itself, over the shoulder of the batsman or bowler. The traditional high, broadcast-style camera angle remains but we never used it, opting instead to keep the much improved new third-person system. Baseball videogames have been doing this for years and it feels a lot more organic.

We found it was far easier to pick and place shots with this new camera angle. You get a far better sense of when to shut up shop, when to



"You call this a chunk of willow?" [unzipping sound]



"Feel like some KFC? Here's a zinger!"

let it through to the keeper and when to slog one over the fence. It's a lot easier to be aware of where the fielders are in this view too. An flavourless but extensive tutorial system will bring you up to speed with advanced batting techniques and teach casual cricket fans a considerable amount of technical stuff about the sport while it's at it.

The stadiums look excellent and the character models are passable but the animations still seem a shade robotic and never manage to shake that pre-canned look.

The lack of any team licenses beyond Australia and England continues to hold the series back. You can edit the names, but there are only really half-a-dozen or so teams that matter in world cricket. If you can get two we can't see why the rest have proven so inaccessible. There are no proper competitions or a career mode either. The next step in this series has to take a leaf out of FIFA's book and allow players to place themselves into a team and play through a career of cricket. **Luke Reilly**

## Final Say

**PRESENTATION** The stadiums look great.

**SOUND** Sparse commentary.

**CONTROLS** Best cricket controls yet. A far better representation of cricket than we're used to.

**REPLAY VALUE** Needed a proper career mode. See FIFA's Be A Pro mode for reference. Oh, and bring on some Boonie DLC.

## Verdict

Not the most comprehensive cricket game but definitely the best when you're on the pitch.

7



### ▶ WHAT'S NEW

## PSN DEVELOPMENTS

What you can expect to see and play on the PSN

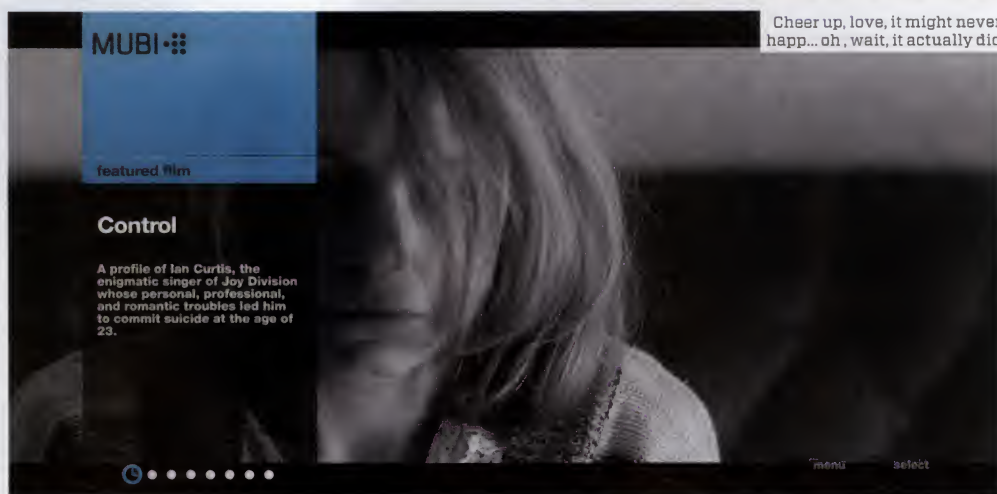
**R**ed Dead Undead. Just like that phrase wash around for a while. Officially called the *Undead Nightmare* Pack, this piece of single-player DLC will be available now for \$15.95. In it, John Marston must find a cure for the plague that's turning people and animals into walking, running corpses. Check out the trailers at [rockstargames.com/](http://rockstargames.com/) undeadnightmare and try not to soil yourself when you see a zombie bear growling. Headshots are mandatory to put the undead back in their graves, so get practicing.

It sits outside the *RDR* canon so don't take it too seriously, but it's certainly a fully formed production. This isn't some half-arsed add-on. This is a standalone episode with the same kinds of high production values you'd expect from a Rockstar product. The pack also includes new game mechanics, weapons and enemies, and also some new multiplayer modes.

The PlayStation Network also welcomes MUBI, the online cinema service. Operating separately to the normal video service on the PSN, MUBI offers more international, independent and classic films to viewers. Stuff from the Coen brothers, Stanley Kubrick and Quentin Tarantino will be



This town ain't big enough for all of 'em



Cheer up, love, it might never happ... oh, wait, it actually did

available to stream, as well as undistributed festival flicks and a whole bunch of art-house stuff to prove to your housemates that your PS3 can do more than the excellent stuff it already does.

MUBI sets itself apart from the normal video service by offering the chance for people to comment on the films they've watched, so others can decide if it's something they'd like too. Consider it a social network of film goers. Martin Scorsese's a member.

The information we have at time of going to print suggests that we'll be able to rent only, rather than download and buy. Nor do we have a definite price guide, though it should be available once you're reading this mag. However, movies can be rented individually or as part of a monthly pack.

Finally, PSN Plus Subscribers can expect the following during November:

- PSN: *Critter Crunch*
- Minis: *Bloons*, *Vampire*
- PSone classic: *Syphon Filter*
- Exclusive discounts: *Precipice of Darkness: Episode One* and *Two* - buy one, get one free, *Death Track* with *Anarchy Racing* bundled in free; *The Punisher: No Mercy* - 50% off; *Landit Bandit* - 50% off
- Dynamic themes: MUBI theme; Shapes theme

## vidzone CHANNEL SPOTLIGHT

THIS MONTH: Electro-Indie Disco



### JUSTICE - D.A.N.C.E.

Get over the groan inducing title (electro-indie *disco*?) and scroll through the list: you'll be rapt at the 60-odd songs here.



### BEASTIE BOYS - BODY MOVIN'

There are a tonne of classics, like this Beastie Boys track where the lads fuse together ninjas and aristocracy.



### LCD SOUNDSYSTEM - DAFT PUNK IS PLAYING AT MY HOUSE

These three, in this order, are an excellent start to your weekend.

VidZone is the largest online music video VOD service in the world, and it's available *free* on PS3. Download the vidzone application and you'll have access to over 13,000 music videos at the push of a button!



## PlayStation®Network

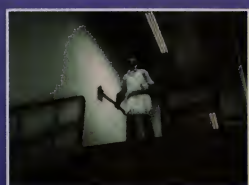
## ESSENTIAL DOWNLOADS

### STAR WARS: TFUII DEMO



The game was not provided to us in time to review it this issue so see what you feel about the game with this sample level.

### DEAD RISING 2 SKILLS PACK - PSYCHO



For less than the price of a Big Mac this new costume gives you bigger, bolder attacks to turn the undead into mincemeat.

### WRC GROUP B CARS



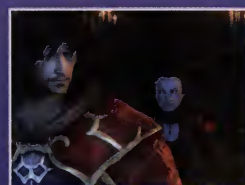
Stupidly fun, this quintet of over-powered cars ramps up the excitement factor for less than two bucks a motor. We love it.

### ROCK BAND - ARE YOU EXPERIENCED



The entry price is a bit steep, however these dozen Jimi Hendrix tracks should form the backbone of a solid rock collection.

### CASTLEVANIA: LORDS OF SHADOW DEMO



Back up our review on page 74 with some hands-on time with Gabriel and the dulcet tones of Patrick Stewart. Whip it good.



# WHAT IS PSN?

The PlayStation Network (PSN) is free to join and free to play. No subscription is required to play online. You'll be able to communicate with friends, access the PlayStation Store and download demos, add-ons, trailers, PSN games, PSone classics and blockbuster movies!



**PlayStation®Network**



It wasn't until later that Greg recalled he couldn't actually play the drums

**GENRE:** MUSIC **RELEASE:** NOW **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA **DEVELOPER:** HARMONIX  
**PLAYERS:** 1-4 **RRP:** \$19.95

## DLC > Rock Band Are You Experienced

Purple haze all around

**H**armonix has pushed the *Rock Band* platform past the 2000-song milestone with a fantastic Jimi Hendrix pack.

The classic track 'Are You Experienced?' comes in at number 2000, but it's backed up by 'Purple Haze', 'Manic Depression', 'Hey Joe' (Live), 'Love or Confusion', 'May This Be Love', 'The Wind Cries Mary', 'Fire' (Live), '3rd Stone from the Sun', 'Foxy Lady', 'Stone Free' and 'Highway Chile'.

It's a mixture of live and studio tracks from the debut album from The Jimi Hendrix Experience, *Are You Experienced*, and honestly it's probably the most crucial bit of DLC for the series all year. You can buy them separately but we can't see why you wouldn't want them all.

As you'd anticipate these tracks are a huge amount of fun – and not just on guitar. The drums and bass in these tracks are similarly cool to play.

We went a good few months only picking up the very occasional track, but we've seen a sharp rise in quality and quantity now that *Rock Band 3* is here. We've seen some decent R.E.M. stuff recently, and cuts from Stone Temple Pilots, The Door and Bon Jovi are on the way.

### VERDICT

It's Hendrix, man. If you're not even slightly into Hendrix we're kind of surprised you're into *Rock Band*.

**GENRE:** ACTION **RELEASE:** NOW **DISTRIBUTOR:** ROCKSTAR **DEVELOPER:** ROCKSTAR  
**SAN DIEGO PLAYERS:** 1-16 **RRP:** \$15.95

## DLC > Red Dead Redemption: Liars and Cheats

Another ace up the sleeve

**A**nother batch of DLC has hit for Rockstar's super-successful Western and it's even more crucial than the first was.

The biggest addition is multiplayer poker and liar's dice. You'll receive a daily allowance of \$200.

This pack also adds horse racing but the catch is you can use weapons during the race. It's pretty chaotic as a result and can get quite frustrating.

The pack also adds the Stronghold competitive multiplayer mode – a team-based mode where each team takes turns attacking and defending a landmark before the clock runs out – plus 15 new characters to play as, pulled from the single player campaign. The list includes Seth Briars, Leigh Johnson, Bonnie MacFarlane, Nigel West Dickens, Abigail Marston and Irish among others.

On top of that it comes with the Explosive Rifle (which has its own new single-player and multiplayer challenges), four new hunting grounds and seven new gang hideouts.

Incidentally, if you have this pack you'll be able to use the Explosive Rifle in the *Undead Nightmare* DLC. We're certain we want to do that.

### VERDICT

More great content for one of this generation's greatest games. Get it now if you know what's good for you.



"Get away from my dog, lady"



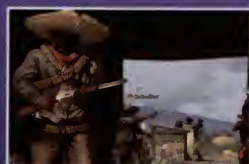
**PlayStation®Network**

## BEST GAMES TO PLAY ONLINE



### MODERN WARFARE 2

**DEVELOPER:** INFINITY WARD  
**PLAYERS:** 1-16  
You can't argue with numbers. There are a lot of competitors online, plus the DLC adds to the abundant options available. Whether it can hold this mantle when *Black Ops* lands, however...



### RED DEAD REDEMPTION

**DEVELOPER:** ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO **PLAYERS:** 1-16  
The connection issues that bothered us are well and truly fixed, so there's no excuse not to jump on, form a posse and start hunting for challengers. Much better as a co-op experience.



### SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV

**DEVELOPER:** CAPCOM  
**PLAYERS:** 1-4  
It's like being in the arcades (remember those?) when you had a bunch of lads and lasses hanging around, marvelling at your quarter-circle technique. Champagne gaming.



### FIFA 10

**DEVELOPER:** EA SPORTS  
**PLAYERS:** 1-20  
Shooters aren't the only games that need explicit tactics, and the beautiful game is remarkably brilliant with 10 versus 10 matches. We'll test its bigger, better brother soon and see if the series keeps the top spot.



### BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY 2

**DEVELOPER:** DICE  
**PLAYERS:** 1-16  
You'll be won over by the chaotic destruction and storming in to an enemy base on the back of a quad bike. You'll stay for the tactics. Team matches have little room for lone wolves.





He's just pissy he forgot his toboggan

GENRE: SHOOTER RELEASE: NOW DISTRIBUTOR: EA DEVELOPER: DANGER CLOSE / DIGITAL ILLUSIONS CE PLAYERS: 1-24 RRP: \$99.95

Multiplayer >

# MEDAL OF HONOR

Above and beyond *Call of Duty*?

**E**A wants you to play *Medal of Honor* online. Badly. It wants you to play it instead of *Call of Duty*.

You certainly can't accuse EA of not taking the challenge relatively seriously. The multiplayer for *Medal of Honor* HAD to work and, as such, it brought in *Battlefield: Bad Company* veterans DICE to make sure it did.

The good news for EA is that it does. *Medal of Honor*'s multiplayer is technically competent and, last time we checked, packed with thousands of players.

The first thing we noticed is how well the single-player devs Danger Close and the DICE team did keeping parity between the modes. We had feared that the difference between the modified Unreal Engine 3-powered single-player and the Frostbite-driven multiplayer would be jarring, but it's not. Multiplayer lacks the ability to lean and peek from cover or go prone, as you can in single-player, but for the most part they feel very much like the same game.

It's quite easy to initially write *Medal of Honor* off as a *Call of Duty* clone, and an unnecessary one at that. To be honest, the comparison isn't completely unjust. The experience is very, very similar. Spawn, kill, die, repeat.

There are just three classes in multiplayer: assault troops, special ops and snipers. Each one levels up independently

of each other. Split your time across the three to build them all up or just choose a specialty and focus entirely on it. Levelling up will unlock new weapons and attachments. There are no *Call of Duty*-style perks to mess with the balance but there are killstreak rewards, or 'scorechains', that are similar to Activision's juggernaut.

We detailed the modes on offer last issue but Combat Mission is our favourite. It's easily the most ambitious of the match types. Coalition forces must work through five connected objectives to win while the insurgents attempt to stop them. It requires a little more thought but it's still just as fast-paced as the more straightforward modes.

The *Call of Duty* faithful may be turned off by a variety of factors, however. The weapon closet is pretty bare compared to the epic arsenal you get in a *Call of Duty* title. There are also fewer classes and fewer unlocks. It feels roughly as tight as *Modern Warfare* but it doesn't seem quite as sharp visually. There isn't as much variety in the maps either. What you get in *Medal of Honor* is urban Afghanistan or rural Afghanistan. It's obviously a side-effect of the game's focussed nature but it makes for a very samey, and very brown, experience.

*Bad Company* graduates will feel the link between the two but likely find *Medal of Honor* coming up short in a few areas

as well. The Frostbite engine, for instance, once again delivers destruction, though it's been very heavily scaled down compared to *Bad Company 2*. It doesn't feel quite as refined either. At least once every match or two we'd find our corpse clipping through some loose level geometry.

We'd argue that *Medal of Honor* doesn't do enough to encourage real teamwork.

**"Nobody will play the game properly if the *only thing worth doing is killing*"**

During one Objective Raid we staked out one of the objectives we needed to protect from enemy sabotage, ready to put down any foes that got close enough to set up a charge. The rest of the Coalition team simply ran towards our opponents firing. The problem is, they got loads of kills and loads of points and we got nothing. There should be some kind of reward for guarding an objective, whether it's eventually attacked or not. Nobody will play the game properly if the only thing worth doing is killing.

A bevy of updates may turn *Medal of Honor* into a must-play multiplayer experience but, for now, you can already get slightly better elsewhere.

## VERDICT

Totally functional but not essential – yet. Hopefully some fast support can change this.





The iPhone's top apps – reviewed!

**FREE!**  
iPhone 4  
COVERWORTH **\$20**

# The essential guide to iPhone

- 4
- 3G
- 3GS



iPhone



iPod



iTunes



Apps

## iPhone 4

Why you won't be able to do without it

### Killer software

Game Center, HDR photos, and video streaming in detail

### Video calling with FaceTime

Apple's new app will change the way you communicate

**PLUS!**

### Jailbreaking

The secrets Apple don't want you to know!



Must-have accessories | Email explained | iBooks app | New Apple TV

# ON SALE NOW!



► TOP 7 COMBO WEAPONS YOU MUST TRY IN

# Dead Rising 2

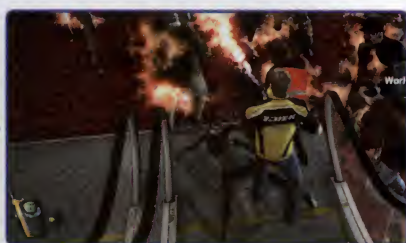
Thousands of zombies. Hundreds of weapons. Dozens of combinations. Seven essential tools for total annihilation. We've picked out a combination of weapons that are the most effective, easy to get and also offer astounding bang for time spent creating them.



## Defiler

Axe + Sledgehammer

Simple. Genius. Devastating. Tap **Ⓢ** and Chuck will swing the four-headed monstrosity upward, and also clearing a bit of space as enemies hit their buddies. Hold **Ⓢ** and he'll spin like a top – perfect for tough crowds. Easy to make, too.



## Flamethrower

Water Gun + Gasoline Canister

Best at point blank, plant your feet and turn in a lazy arc for Flambé de Zomb. Fire spreads, so you could say you're turning up the heat. Ho ho. You might not like it immediately – it is a slow burner after all "boom-tish".



## Laser Sword

Gems + Flashlight

Once upon a time in a casino far, far away, copyright infringement was rife. That said, a couple of quick swishes with this melee weapon does a chainsaw-like job of clefting the undead in twain, and you don't need much force either.



## Auger

Pitchfork + Drill Motor

Best pronounced in an Arnie accent, it looks like something from the Schwarzenegger classic *Commando*. This heavy weapon can't be stored in your inventory but it's handy for just running into zombies and also turning them into souvlaki-sized pieces.



## Paddlesaw

Paddle + Chain Saw

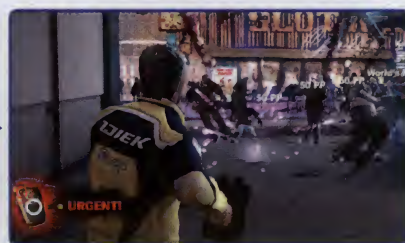
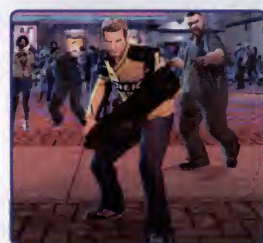
What is says on the label. We dig it as demonstration of the game's dynamic cutting, but it's really just an iconic weapon. Fine for ambient defense this works best on an intimate crowd, rather than wide-open areas.



## Hail Mary

Grenade + Football

You have to work for this, but it's perfect for setting long-distance challenges. At the least, it's something you have to try, but cleaving the ball – especially from atop a fountain or balcony – makes your stomach do a little loop.

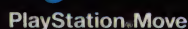


## Rocket Launcher

Rocket Fireworks + Lead Pipe

Very important to get the rocket fireworks for this – they're in a cluster of three. It's not supremely accurate but it's exceptionally pretty. Let loose six at a time and marvel at the confetti of legs and arms that rain down after a multi-coloured explosion.





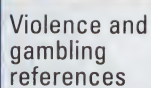
**MOVE INTO THE ACTION!**

**au.playstation.com**

# THE FIGHT™

Fancy yourself as a bare knuckle boxer or heavyweight champ? Battle it out with the toughest of underground brawlers, using the PlayStation Move controller to throw punches, bob, weave, and stick in some dirty low blows. Take on a friend in multiplayer or push yourself to the limit in single player mode. Move into the action with PS3!

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**3D**  
Compatible  
Game



PS3

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### ► MUST WATCH

## The A-Team (M)

**DIRECTOR:** JOE CARNAHAN **CAST:** LIAM NEESON, BRADLEY COOPER, JESSICA BIEL, QUINTON 'RAMPAGE' JACKSON  
**AVAILABLE ON:** BLU-RAY, DVD

**W**e pity the fool who never got to watch the *The A-Team* series in all of its cheesy '80s splendour. While this remake updates the wayward four man team to ex-Desert Storm vets on the run (as opposed to ex-'Nam soldiers), the spirit of mayhem and action has been copied across without too much dilution. It has to be said though that we would have preferred it if they dug up and re-used the original B.A. Baracus. As a brother there is no other.

Honestly, if you're in trouble and looking for an enthralling plot with rich characters – and nobody can help you – *The A-Team* probably can't help you either. At its heart this movie is positively bloated with typical CGI explosions, smirky one-liners and cheeseball situations.

**Watch this if you like watching stuff explode in the '80s (not the space shuttle).**

**Verdict** A non-stop assault of action scenes (some good, some choppy) and comedic one-liners that have about a 50 per cent success rate.

# 6



**"The spirit of mayhem has been copied across without too much dilution"**



## Beverly Hills Cop (M15+)

**DIRECTOR** MARTIN BREST **CAST** EDDIE MURPHY, LISA EILBACHER, JUDGE REINHOLD **AVAILABLE** (RENT) \$4.99, 4518MB (HD) \$3.99 1277MB (SD)

**P**laying Axel Foley, the street-smart wise-ass cop from Detroit, is a decision that put Eddie Murphy on the map. In order to track down his best friend's killer in Beverly Hills Axel must hunt down the gangsters responsible and thwart the local police who don't appreciate out-of-towners. Typically he achieves the latter with a never-ending supply of bullshit, other times with a banana and a tailpipe.

As an action/comedy this stands up pretty well today and the mismatched buddy trio of Foley, Taggart and

Roseweed is just as hilarious as ever. Also, this movie sports one of the most iconic theme songs of all time.

**Watch this if you like the time when Eddie Murphy's movies were good.**

**Verdict** This movie is about as infectious as Eddie Murphy's bizarre laugh. Rent it tonight if you don't have it.

# 8

### PlayStation®Store

#### ► TOP TEN

## Movies on Demand



- 1 **The Book of Eli** Sony
- 2 **Kick Ass** Universal
- 3 **Date Night** Fox
- 4 **Iron Man 2** Paramount
- 5 **The Crazies** Roadshow
- 6 **Beneath Hill 60** Paramount
- 7 **The Blind Side** Warner Bros.
- 8 **A Prophet** Sony
- 9 **Robin Hood** Universal
- 10 **The Bounty Hunter** Sony

Source: au.playstation.com

**Now available to rent or own on PlayStation®Store**

The PlayStation Network Video Store offers hundreds of titles available to rent or own at the click of a button!





## Predators (MA15+)

**DIRECTOR:** NIMRÖD ANTAL **CAST:** ADRIEN BRODY, TOPHER GRACE, ALICE BRAGA, WALTON GOGGINS, OLEG TAKTAROV, LAURENCE FISHBURNE, DANNY TREJO  
**AVAILABLE ON:** BLU-RAY, DVD

Royce (Brody) is a mercenary who wakes up to find himself falling from the sky into a jungle. Once on the ground he inherits command of an elite team of various human badasses who have all arrived in the jungle the same way. Trapped in what turns out to be a Predator game reserve they must work together to survive. Producer Robert Rodriguez and director Antal have expressed that they want this film to be regarded as a sequel only to the original *Predator* and *Predator 2* as they're trying to distance it from the two *Alien vs Predator* films. We agree with their thoughts and it's best viewed with that in mind. *Predators* is bloody and crammed with action – but the film does take its foot off the throttle a little too much when Laurence Fishburne's character is introduced.

Watch this if you like *Predator*.

**Verdict** It took 23 years but we finally got a decent sequel to one of the best films of the '80s.

6



## The Pacific (MA15+)

**PRODUCERS:** STEVEN SPIELBERG, TOM HANKS **CAST:** JAMES BADGE DALE, JON SEDA, JOSEPH MAZZELLO  
**AVAILABLE ON:** BLU-RAY, DVD

It's no secret that *Band of Brothers* was a success (hell, Ubisoft and Gearbox basically remade it with *Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway*). *The Pacific* is a bit different to *Brothers* in that it doesn't retell the story of a unit, rather it is a 10-part mini-series about the intertwined stories of three Marines. While the perspective shift offers a much more personal tale, there are times when the story jumps about too quickly for our tastes. Similarly, even though the main characters feel fewer than *Band of Brothers*, their introductions seem a little rushed. When the characters and setting eventually do find their boots the tale becomes just as gripping as its European front twin. All in all, both mini-series can stand proud as high-class HBO productions, but not quite as equals.

Watch this if you like *Band of Brothers* or the plethora of WWII games we all grew up on.

**Verdict** Sacrifices action for an arguably more disturbing look at the psychological strains of war.

8



## The Back to the Future Trilogy (PG)

**DIRECTOR:** ROBERT ZEMECKIS **CAST:** MICHAEL J. FOX, CHRISTOPHER LLOYD, LEA THOMPSON **AVAILABLE ON:** BLU-RAY

As far as trilogies go the *Back to the Future* series is right up there with *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* (notice how we ignored all prequels and fourth episodes there). Smartly conceived and painstakingly executed, this holy trinity of films with their rich tapestry of comedy, action and sci-fi coolness come very close to achieving cinematic perfection. In terms of extras this pack is graced with an average of six minutes worth of deleted/extended scenes for each of the movies, among other things. Make like a tree and get this, butthead.

Watch this if you like Huey Lewis, hoverboards, DeLoreans and the b-b-beef special.

**Verdict** These movies are as fantastic as when we first saw them. Great transfers too.

10



## Top Gear The Challenges 4 (PG)

**CAST:** JEREMY CLARKSON, JAMES MAY, RICHARD HAMMOND **AVAILABLE ON:** BLU-RAY, DVD

Far and away the most entertaining segments in *Top Gear*'s entertainment arsenal are the roadtrip-esque challenges between the three hosts. *The Challenges 4* is a collection that contains some of the lad's better shenanigans. These include the time when they took three rear-wheel drive coupes on a trip across France for some ice racing and their showdown between the Bugatti's mighty 1000 horsepower Veyron versus McLaren's legendary F1 hypercar. The latter of course, required a trip to Abu Dhabi and a pay off to the local police to get them to close off a long straight road. While the exotic settings and cars are amazing it's the comedic chemistry and timing between Clarkson, Hammond and May that make this thoroughly entertaining from go to woaah.

Watch this if you like cars, or laughing.

**Verdict** What amazes us is how utterly re-watchable these segments are. Truly fantastic TV.

9



## Get Him to the Greek (MA15+)

**DIRECTOR:** NICHOLAS STOLLER **CAST:** JONAH HILL, RUSSELL BRAND, ROSE BYRNE **AVAILABLE ON:** BLU-RAY, DVD

Essentially a spin-off to the movie *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, *Get Him to the Greek* details the continuing misadventures of British rockstar Aldous Snow (Brand). Snow returns to a life of drugs when his girlfriend (our own Rose Byrne) dumps him and takes away their son. In a hope to redeem the rockstar and feature him in a gig in the US, Aaron (Hill) is a record company intern charged with tracking Snow down, extricating him from the mother of all benders and somehow getting him to the Greek theatre in LA. There are some hilarious, albeit low-brow, moments here that wittily send up the pitfalls of being a rockstar and the movie displays the vulgar-sweet fusion that's reminiscent of the Judd Apatow school of comedy.

Watch this if you like *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*.

**Verdict** The two leads forge a great on-screen partnership and this has laugh-out-loud moments.

8



## Ong Bak 3: The Final Showdown (MA15+)

**DIRECTOR:** TONY JAA **CAST:** TONY JAA, DAN CHUPONG **AVAILABLE ON:** BLU-RAY, DVD

Honestly, this movie feels like a throwback to the design philosophies of *Game of Death* (the film that dodgily continued to be produced even though Bruce Lee clocked out halfway through). Series star Tony Jaa puts in most of his screen time via existing footage and the movie desperately tries to pad itself out with a long series of flashbacks. The rest of his character's appearance (and general lack of movement) is explained away by serious injuries, which is a cheap trick. There are some fairly cool, super-pacifist, kata dances but that's really not what we signed on for.

Watch this if you like watching a potentially rad film, like *Game of Death*, get ruined by cheap tricks.

**Verdict** If you've previously seen the other *Ong Bak* films you've seen most of this already.

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► MUST WATCH

# The Social Network

(M)

**DIRECTOR:** DAVID FINCHER **CAST:** JESSE EISENBERG, JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE, ANDREW GARFIELD **IN CINEMAS:** NOW

**B**elieve the hype. Murmurs from the States indicate this is on track to rake in Academy awards, and it should. This is a truly gripping tale of how the world's biggest social media network, Facebook, was created.

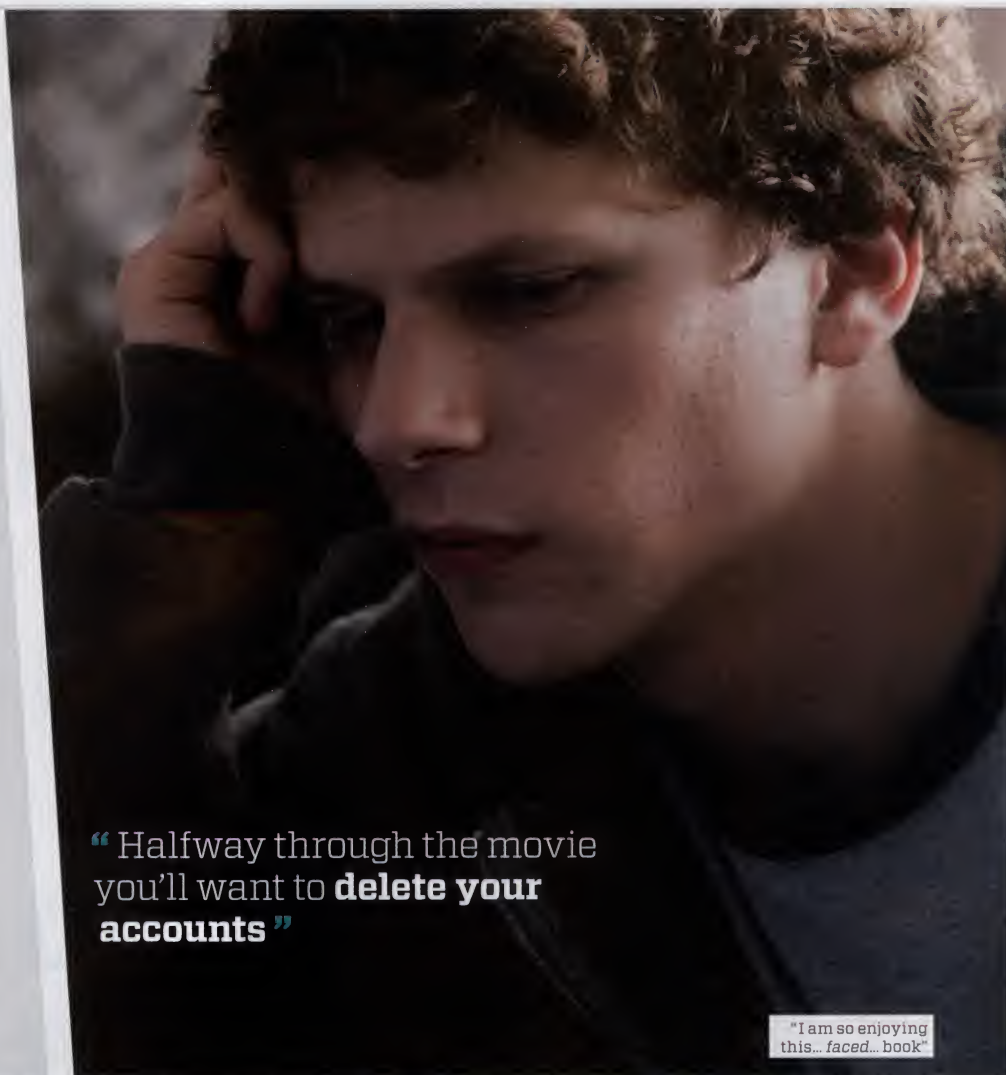
It may seem premature that this movie is out now when you'd expect it to be more apt in a decade's time, and in retrospect. However, the site's astonishing rise into our social consciousness and its own malleable form mean it may be hard to pick an end point. Zuckerberg (Eisenberg) says "it's never going to be 'finished'," talking about the site to his then partner Eduardo Saverin (Garfield). Plus, this isn't strictly about Facebook. Rather it's about the creativity, lies and deception that went into its creation. It's absolutely gripping.

Fincher's film succeeds because of the neurotic genius Zuckerberg, played deadpan and with absolute sincerity by Eisenberg – it becomes clear from the first 15 minutes of the film that the world's youngest billionaire isn't quite the full quid – and is quickly sucked in by the fast words of Sean Parker (Timberlake) who somehow gets a slice of Facebook pie. Who's he? The guy that invented Napster, and he's a remarkably punchable villain.

Garfield's portrayal of Saverin shows us a pawn that believed his roommate at Harvard was acting in his best interest. Whether you think he was outsmarted or just naïve depends on how sympathetic you are.

Halfway through the movie you'll want to delete your account, but by the end we reckon you'll walk away with your digital life still intact – although with a brand new appreciation of what it takes to be connected.

**Watch this if you like** *American Beauty*, *The Game*



“Halfway through the movie you'll want to **delete your accounts**”

“I am so enjoying this... faced... book”



Looks like blue hill to us

# Red Hill

(MA15+)

**DIRECTOR:** PATRICK HUGHES **CAST:** RYAN KWANTEN, STEVE BISLEY, TOMMY LEWIS, CLAIRE VAN DER BOOM

**C**op Shane Cooper (Kwanten) has just arrived in Red Hill, a small country town in middle-of-nowhere-Australia from the city with his pregnant wife (van der Boom). His direct superior, Old Bill (Bisley) is a hardarse. He's not interested in babysitting the new kid from the big smoke, and the rest of the staff at the police station doesn't really care that much about him either.

From the start we're teased about a rogue panther that lives in the hills – an unfortunate horse is its first victim. Then there's a prison

break, and Old Bill hears Jimmy Conway's (Lewis) escaped, and rightly suspects he's on his way back into town to take revenge. So does that mean two villains? Almost.

*Red Hill* suddenly changes from a thriller to a horror movie. Conway turns out to be part Freddy Krueger, part Jason Voorhees, and his quarry are fairly slack-jawed and one-dimensional. When all is said and done you're pretty much left with a rainy-day flick to pass the time. Which is a shame, because this had potential.



# Red

(M)

**DIRECTOR:** ROBERT SCHWENTKE **CAST:** BRUCE WILLIS, MARY-LOUISE PARKER, KARL URBAN, HELEN MIRREN, MORGAN FREEMAN, JOHN MALKOVICH, BRIAN COX

**R**etired, extremely dangerous is the acronym behind *Red*, but it could also be 'really extremely dull'. Based on the DC Comics series, a bunch of ex-CIA agents are suddenly forced out of retirement when Frank Moses (Willis) is visited by a crack team of government-run killers. He wastes them all and goes off to visit Sarah (Parker). They've only ever spoken on the phone – she's the girl who issues his retirement cheques – but they share a love of trashy novels.

Moses then pulls together his old team to figure out why he's being hunted down. Hot on his hind is a crack CIA agent (Urban). It's an all-star cast – everyone does a decent job though Brian Cox is a bit hammy – and Helen Mirren is surprising in her gun-toting role, but *Red* lacks consistency. It moves at a disjointed pace with lame jokes, and a few poignant moments are left weightless. Still, if you just want to see Bruce Willis beat people up and don't mind suffering some inane set pieces to get there, *Red* delivers.





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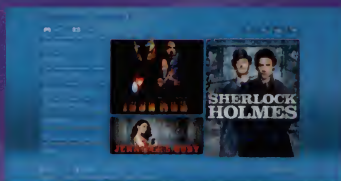
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# index

## ABOUT THE INDEX

Check out our handy index of all the PS3 titles we feel you should play (and some you shouldn't). Please note: scores are a reflection of a game's comparative quality at the time of release and will not change – but the index may be updated as titles age or are superseded by new games.

### ACTION

**50 Cent: Blood on the Sand** 7  
SWORDFISH STUDIOS  
So dumb it's dangerously good. Better than it sounds.

**Army of Two** 7  
EA MONTREAL  
Solid co-op thrills make up for its wasted potential.

**Army of Two: The 40th Day** 7  
EA MONTREAL  
Still bone-headed but a lot tighter and more fun than the first.

**Avatar** 7  
UBISOFT MONTREAL  
If you've got a 3D TV, buy it. If not, it's too derivative to bother.

**RECOMMENDED Bayonetta** 9  
PLATINUM GAMES  
It takes balls to make a game this violent, sexy and weird.

**Bionic Commando** 7  
GRIN  
There are some great moments, but they're few and far between.

**The Bourne Conspiracy** 7  
HIGH MOON STUDIOS  
Great presentation and vibe, samey action. Stylish, superficial.

**The Club** 8  
BIZARRE CREATIONS  
Original, compulsive and fun.

**Damnation** 3  
BLUE OMEGA ENTERTAINMENT  
Uninspired level design, broken gameplay.

**Dark Sector** 7  
DIGITAL EXTREMES  
Solid but hardly perfect.

**Dark Void** 6  
AIRTIGHT GAMES  
Uninspiring graphics, lacklustre sound and dull, dull combat.



**DEAD RISING 2** 9  
DEVELOPER: BLUE CASTLE GAMES  
PUBLISHER: THQ PLAYERS: 1-4  
"You'll wear a stupid grin pretty much from start to finish and it's a riot in co-op. A must-play. The satisfaction of literally cutting down thousands of zombies with anything you can pick up is its only hook – but it works a treat."

**Dead to Rights: Retribution** 6  
VOLATILE GAMES  
Fine, but doesn't do enough to stand out. Needs more dog.

**Devil May Cry 4** 7  
CAPCOM  
Memorable bosses but too much backtracking spoils things.

**Eat Lead: The Return of Matt Hazard** 6  
VICIOUS CYCLE SOFTWARE  
Great concept and nice parody, but basic one-play stuff.

**Fracture** 7  
DAY 1 STUDIOS  
Altering terrain is a neat twist but overall it left us wanting.

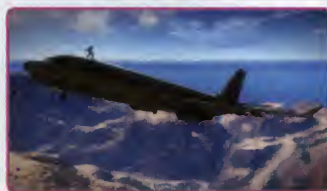
**Front Mission Evolved** 7  
DOUBLE HELIX GAMES  
Likable but limited mech-based combat.

**Genji: Days of the Blade** 5  
GAME REPUBLIC  
Flashy graphics, giant enemy crabs, piss-poor plodding gameplay.

**RECOMMENDED Ghostbusters: The Video Game** 9  
TERMINAL REALITY / THREEWAVE SOFTWARE  
Robust, charming and impeccably presented. Fantastic fun.

**Iron Man** 3  
SECRET LEVEL  
Filled to the brim with bugs. Totally substandard.

**John Woo Presents: Stranglehold** 7  
MIDWAY CHICAGO  
Won't set the world on fire, but packs frantic Max Payne-lite fun.



**JUST CAUSE 2** 9  
DEVELOPER: AVALANCHE STUDIOS  
PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS  
PLAYERS: 1  
"Parachutes. Grappling hooks. Stripper zeppelins. Why don't you already own this game? If you can dream it, you can do it in this insane action game. Leap from plane to plane then fly it under a bridge. Upside-down. Buy it now."

**Kane & Lynch: Dead Men** 6  
IO INTERACTIVE  
A let down. Gets close to greatness before crashing back down.

**Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days** 7  
IO INTERACTIVE  
Michael Mann/YouTube visuals? Great. The game? Average.

**Lost Planet: Extreme Condition** 6  
CAPCOM / K2 LLC  
A half-arsed port you'd never bother with.

**Lost Planet 2** 7  
CAPCOM  
Slim pickings for solo players but multiplayer buffs may dig it.

**RECOMMENDED Mercenaries 2: World in Flames** 8  
PANDEMIC STUDIOS  
Weak in many areas but has fun in spades.

**Mobile Suit Gundam: Target in Sight** 3  
NAMCO BANDAI  
A rubber Godzilla of a title. What a pike blocker!

**Ninja Gaiden Sigma** 8  
TEAM NINJA  
A treasure trove of gaming goodness. And violence.

**RECOMMENDED Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2** 8  
TEAM NINJA  
A sexy and rock hard title but the gore's been cut.

**RECOMMENDED Prototype** 8  
RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT  
A simple superhero kill-fest but a truckload of guilty fun.

**RECOMMENDED Red Faction: Guerrilla** 9  
VOLITION, INC.  
Huge fun. The best destruction effects ever, hands down.

**Saints Row 2** 9  
VOLITION, INC.  
Puerile, mean-spirited and technically outclassed, if you care.

**SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs Confrontation** 6  
SLANT SIX GAMES  
A sturdy, dependable effort that fails to excite.

**Terminator Salvation** 4  
GRIN / HALCYON GAMES  
An abysmal failure. Short, filled with glitches.

**Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2** 8  
RED STORM ENTERTAINMENT  
A tense, realistic shooter. Cool gadgets.

**Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen** 6  
LUXOFLUX  
A day of undemanding fun but really no more than that.

**Transformers: War for Cybertron** 7  
HIGH MOON  
Its strength lies in multiplayer. Fun but not engaging.

**Wanted: Weapons of Fate** 5  
GRIN  
Designed only to appeal to mentally-subnormal 11-year-olds.

**RECOMMENDED Warhawk** 9  
INCOGNITO ENTERTAINMENT / SCE SANTA MONICA STUDIO  
Furiously addictive. Tighter than a bull's arse on fight night.

**WET** 8  
A2M  
With so much style, who needs substance? Great grindhouse fare.

**Wheelman** 6  
MIDWAY STUDIOS - NEWCASTLE / TIGON STUDIOS  
Rubbish low-speed handling and underdone throughout.

**X-Men Origins: Wolverine** 7  
RAVEN SOFTWARE  
A head slicin' chest beater of a slash 'em up. Repetitive though.

### ACTION-ADVENTURE

**3D Dot Game Heroes** 7  
FROM SOFTWARE  
If you pine for the past this should keep you entertained.

**Alone in the Dark: Inferno** 6  
EDEN STUDIOS  
Post-Dead Space this just doesn't cut the mustard. At all.

**RECOMMENDED Assassin's Creed** 10  
UBISOFT MONTREAL  
A landmark. Dated now, but was truly awe-inspiring at the time.

**RECOMMENDED Assassin's Creed II** 9  
UBISOFT MONTREAL  
When everything gels correctly it casually murders its predecessor.

**RECOMMENDED Batman: Arkham Asylum** 8  
ROCKSTEADY STUDIOS  
Really delivers the goods. Best Batman game ever. Best superhero game full stop.

**RECOMMENDED Brutal Legend** 9  
DOUBLE FINE PRODUCTIONS  
Must play. If God gave rock 'n roll to us then it's settled: Tim Schafer is God.

**Clash of the Titans** 4  
GAME REPUBLIC  
A piss-poor action game lacking in every way. Do not bother.

**Conan** 7  
NIHILISTIC SOFTWARE  
A bulldog of bloodletting, savage adventure and boobies.

**RECOMMENDED Dante's Inferno** 8  
VISCERAL GAMES  
Derivative and simple, but well-produced and very playable.

**RECOMMENDED Darksiders** 8  
VIGIL GAMES  
It'll test your patience but persevere and your satisfaction will swell.

**RECOMMENDED Dead Space** 9  
EA REDWOOD SHORES  
Super tense. The future of survival horror.

**Demon's Souls** 7  
FROM SOFTWARE  
Those looking for an extreme challenge may have met their match.

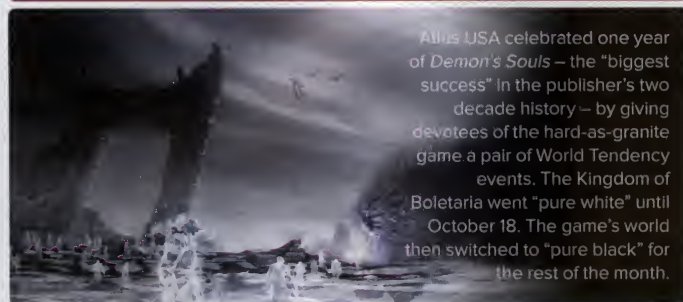
**RECOMMENDED Enslaved** 8  
NINJA THEORY  
A fun platforming romp based on the same classic story as TV's *Monkey* was.

**Fairytale Fights** 7  
PLAYLOGIC GAME FACTORY  
Quirky and sadistic, but too simplistic for engaging solo play.

**Folklore** 8  
GAME REPUBLIC  
Original and surprising with moments of genius.

**The Godfather: The Don's Edition** 6  
EA REDWOOD SHORES  
It made for a decent PS2 game but skip this port. It's not worth it.

### Black and white



Allis USA celebrated one year of *Demon's Souls* – the "biggest success" in the publisher's two decade history – by giving devotees of the hard-as-granite game a pair of World Tendency events. The Kingdom of Boletaria went "pure white" until October 18. The game's world then switched to "pure black" for the rest of the month.



## Nathan loves Nathan

Nathan Fillion of *Firefly* and *Castle* fame has his eye on being Drake in the upcoming *Uncharted* film. He uploaded the following to his Twitter account: "If ever there was a Twitter campaign, let this be it. Rise, ye Browncoats. Rise, ye Castillions. RISE!"



**The Godfather II**  
EA REDWOOD SHORES  
Starts as a decent crime caper but alienates fans of the film.

**ESSENTIAL God of War III**  
SCE SANTA MONICA STUDIO / BLUEPOINT GAMES  
A showcase. Old-fashioned arse-kicking, astonishing visuals.

**RECOMMENDED God of War Collection**  
SCE SANTA MONICA STUDIO / BLUEPOINT GAMES  
Age has not diminished its impact. Purchase immediately.

**Golden Axe: Beast Rider**  
SECRET LEVEL  
Destined for the chopping block. No co-op? Boo!

**ESSENTIAL Grand Theft Auto IV**  
ROCKSTARNORTH  
The technical scope and scale of *GTAIV* dwarfs all. Remarkable.



**GRAND THEFT AUTO: EPISODES FROM LIBERTY CITY**  
DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR NORTH  
PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR PLAYERS: 1-16  
"Superior to *GTAIV* in many ways with two new and more interesting single-player campaigns, expanded multiplayer options and a vast array of new weapons and vehicles. Explosive shotgun? Yes please."

**Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince**  
EA BRIGHT LIGHT STUDIO  
Play the whole 30 minutes and you've played the whole game.

**Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix**  
EA UK  
The chore-like structure will probably bore most.

**Heavenly Sword**  
NINJA THEORY  
Slick graphics and refined combat. A bit short though.

**Hellboy: The Science of Evil**  
KROME STUDIOS  
Sluggish and generic. Ordinary on all counts. A shame, really.

**RECOMMENDED inFamous**  
SUCKER PUNCH PRODUCTIONS  
A superpowered take on the urban crime-fighting sandbox.

**LEGO Batman**  
TRAVELLER'S TALES  
Sound and faithful, but the formula is getting a bit old.

**LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4**  
TRAVELLER'S TALES  
The most thorough LEGO universe yet. More exploration than combat.

**RECOMMENDED LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures**  
TRAVELLER'S TALES  
Happiness and wonder overcame us with this joyous adaptation.

**Lost: Via Domus**  
UBISOFT MONTREAL  
Some solid adventuring, but the voice acting is rubbish.

**RECOMMENDED Mafia 2**  
2K CZECH  
Its attention to detail, presentation and sound is to be admired.

**ESSENTIAL Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots**  
KIJIMA PRODUCTIONS  
Insane productions values. A titan amongst games. Epic.

**Overlord: Raising Hell**  
4J STUDIOS / TRIUMPH STUDIOS  
A bundle of fun, mixing tactics with a juvenile love of chaos.

**Overlord II**  
TRIUMPH STUDIOS  
Refined gameplay and more jokes but control quirks persist.

**Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End**  
EUROCOM  
Looks the part but unfortunately it doesn't feel or play the part.

**Planet 51**  
PYRO STUDIOS  
Like a dry cracker for dinner. Bland and boring, and no fun.

**Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands**  
UBISOFT MONTREAL  
Worth your time but better swordplay could've really helped.

**Prison Break**  
ZOOTFLY  
A below-average stealth game cobbled together on the cheap.

**RECOMMENDED Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time**  
INSOMNIAC GAMES  
Reinvigorates the genre without reinventing the wheel.

**RECOMMENDED Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools of Destruction**  
INSOMNIAC GAMES  
A big, wild, good ol' fashioned adventure.



**RED DEAD REDEMPTION**  
DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO  
PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR PLAYERS: 1-16  
"A sweeping epic that's among the best games we've ever played. We're not lying when we say it's better than *GTAIV* in a lot of crucial areas. Plus, the upcoming *Undead Nightmare* DLC sounds like a real contender for greatest thing ever."

**RECOMMENDED Resident Evil 5**  
CAPCOM  
A grand, bloody adventure but the inventory system remains bad.

**RECOMMENDED The Saboteur**  
PANDEMIC STUDIOS  
Charming and packed with action. Great, unique visual style.

**Silent Hill Homecoming**  
DOUBLE HELIX GAMES  
New combat system is good, but lacks the cerebral chills.

**The Simpsons Game**  
EA REDWOOD SHORES  
Short, but the cromulent visuals embiggen the experience.

**Sonic the Hedgehog**  
SONIC TEAM  
There are cheaper ways to get a spare Blu-ray case.

**Sonic Unleashed**  
SONIC TEAM  
It's the least awful Sonic game in years, if that means anything.

**Spider-Man: Web of Shadows**  
TREYARCH / SHABA GAMES  
Swift and tidy but not exactly deep.

**Star Wars: The Force Unleashed**  
LUCASARTS  
Plays a good game but fails to use its idea to maximum effect.

**RECOMMENDED Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent**  
UBISOFT SHANGHAI  
Obsessive and gripping, online and off. Obtain.

**Toy Story 3**  
AVALANCHE SOFTWARE  
Cute, simple, and charming as hell. Way better than you think.

**ESSENTIAL Uncharted: Drake's Fortune**  
NAUGHTY DOG  
Awesome plot, awesome graphics, awesome action. This owns.

**ESSENTIAL Uncharted 2: Among Thieves**  
NAUGHTY DOG  
This is the reason Hollywood is so worried about videogames.

**Viking: Battle for Asgard**  
THE CREATIVE ASSEMBLY  
Slow attacks and weak visuals but it has its appeal.

**Yakuza 3**  
AMUSEMENT VISION  
Certainly an acquired taste. Lots to do but the slow pace grates.

## ADVENTURE

**RECOMMENDED Heavy Rain**  
QUANTIC DREAM  
Not quite a revolution but clever and well-crafted.

**Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust**  
TEAM17 SOFTWARE  
An amazing new low for this generation.

## FIGHTING

**Battle Fantasia**  
ARC SYSTEM WORKS  
A nice curiosity but, seriously, get *Super Street Fighter IV*.



## THE BEST PSone CLASSICS ON PlayStation®Store



**FINAL FANTASY VII**  
DEVELOPER: SQUARE  
PLAYERS: 1  
The RPG upon which all other RPGs are generally judged. *Final Fantasy VII* is a modern classic and a worthy part of every credible videogame library.



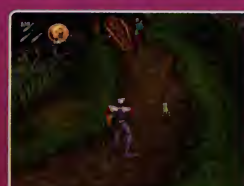
**DRIVER**  
DEVELOPER: REFLECTIONS  
INTERACTIVE PLAYERS: 1  
The original *Driver* hit PlayStation like a blast of fresh air. Hectic car chases through 3D cities may old-hat now but when *Driver* debuted it was like nothing we'd seen.



**CRASH BANDICOOT 3: WARPED**  
DEVELOPER: NAUGHTY DOG  
PLAYERS: 1  
The best platformer on any PlayStation. As far as old-school run and jump action in purpose-built levels goes, this is the zenith.



**SYPHON FILTER**  
DEVELOPER: EIDETIC  
PLAYERS: 1  
If you still think *Syphon Filter* was a MGS rip-off you're misled. Play it again and tell us this awesome series doesn't deserve a PS3 comeback.



**MEDIEVIL**  
DEVELOPER: SCE STUDIO  
CAMBRIDGE PLAYERS: 1  
Speaking of games that deserve a PS3 comeback, where's Sir Dan? Fantasy hack 'n slash meets the supernatural. *MediEvil* still does it better than most since.





inhouse

FEATURED STUDIO OF THE MONTH

# Rocksteady Studios

LOCATION: LONDON, UK FOUNDED: 2004 BEST KNOWN FOR: BATMAN: ARKHAM ASYLUM

A fledgling studio in its current form, Rocksteady's core bunch of blokes are no strangers to videogame development. Formed out of a team in North London called Argonaut, they made a number of titles for PSone and PS2. Their repertoire included a bunch of original games, like *Croc* and its sequel on PSone and *I-Ninja* on PS2, as well as tackling licensed IPs like *The Emperor's New Groove*.

So far, Rocksteady is repeating the pattern of original developments and licensed titles with the excellent *Urban Chaos: Riot Response* on PS2 and the even better *Batman: Arkham Asylum* on PS3. It's currently in the final stages of finishing *Batman: Arkham City*.

Getting to where they are came off the back of a meeting with Eidos. The European publisher approached Rocksteady to make a Batman game, and game director Sefton Hill along with studio director Jamie Walker went back to Eidos with their proposal. Eidos gave it the green light and, with 37 development staff on board *Batman: Arkham Asylum* was born.

The team ballooned out to nearly 50 as *Arkham Asylum* was being finished, and went straight into making *Arkham City*.

They're very determined to get their characters just right. Dax Ginn, marketing game manager, told us, "I think getting the character right was one of the things that we initially achieved, and I think that's where a lot of other developers have failed."

"They haven't asked themselves the question 'what are the core personality traits and principles by which Batman lives?'. He's got this incredibly troubled and dark personality in lots of ways, but a rigid moral compass, and understanding that a Batman experience is not just about fighting."

"A lot of games have just focused on a combat system... A complete Batman experience requires you not to just get the combat right, but also the navigation, and the detective aspects of his personality, to understand his relationship with all of the other villains he will encounter."

**BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger**  
ARCSYSTEM WORKS  
Wildier, wackier and noisier than anything else on PS3.

**Def Jam: Icon**  
EA CHICAGO  
Pretty and highly kinetic. A bit cumbersome though.

**FaceBreaker**  
EA CANADA  
Great look but very unbalanced. Tough to recommend.

**The King of Fighters XII**  
SNK PLAYMORE  
Grey, old and well beyond retirement. Irredeemable.

**Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe**  
MIDWAY GAMES  
A fun game with mass appeal but not very technical.

**RECOMMENDED Soulcalibur IV**  
NAMCO BANDAI  
Phenomenal, but will let down those expecting a revolution.

**RECOMMENDED Street Fighter IV**  
CAPCOM / DIMPS  
A tight-fisted gut blow of wow, but you'd grab *Super Street Fighter IV* instead now.



**SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV**  
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM/DIMPS  
PUBLISHER: THQ PLAYERS: 1-2

"With the 'vanilla' versions vibrant look, online mode and pristine gameplay - but with a stack of new characters, all unlocked and at a bargain price - *Super Street Fighter IV* belongs in everyone's collection. Yes, even though it doesn't feature Mike Haggar."

**RECOMMENDED Tekken 6**  
NAMCO BANDAI  
Easy to play, with the biggest roster ever. Feels a bit old, though.

**TNA Impact!**  
MIDWAY STUDIOS - LOS ANGELES  
Good, arcade-style biff but there's not enough content.

**Virtua Fighter 5**  
SEGA-AM2  
As hardcore as fighting games get. Deep and balanced.

**WWE Legends of WrestleMania**  
YUKE'S  
Gets by on retro charm but feels absolutely ancient.

**WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010**  
YUKE'S  
If the soap-drama of the WWE's your thing, welcome to nirvana.

## FLYING

**Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII**  
UBISOFT ROMANIA  
A simple aerial blaster. Flawed but fun.

**Blazing Angels 2: Secret Missions of WWII**  
UBISOFT ROMANIA  
Solid, varied, but not quite the ace of aces.

**Heroes Over Europe**  
TRANSMISSION GAMES  
A little rough but not bad. *IL-2* is much better though.



**IL-2 STURMOVIK: BIRDS OF PREY**  
DEVELOPER: GALJIN ENTERTAINMENT  
PUBLISHER: AFA PLAYERS: 1-16

"Head turning visuals, astonishing attention to detail, brilliant sound effects and stacks of ratta-tat action all combine in this truly surprisingly awesome aerial combat game. To be honest it's the best flight game we've ever played."

**Lair**  
FACTOR 5  
It feels rushed and unfinished. Deeply disappointing.

**Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.**  
UBISOFT ROMANIA  
Tight and accessible but a bit sterile.

**RECOMMENDED Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2**  
UBISOFT ROMANIA  
A top gun successor. More detail, better mission design.

## MUSIC

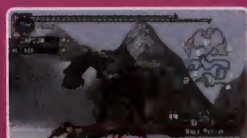
**AC/DC Live: Rock Band Track Pack**  
HARMONIX  
Bare-bones stuff but the music is worth it. Fully exportable.

## THE BEST PSP GAMES



**GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES**  
DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR LEEDS  
PLAYERS: 1-6

This is about as remarkable as gaming gets on a handheld console. A fully-fledged 3D GTA, just like the PS2 versions, on PSP - and it feels absolutely brilliant. Also? Phil Collins is in it. No, we're totally serious.



**MONSTER HUNTER FREEDOM UNITE**  
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM  
PLAYERS: 1-4

*Monster Hunter* is a true system seller in its native Japan and it deserves that sort of awareness here. It's an adventure game to lose your life to and will reward you in spades if you're able to put the effort in.



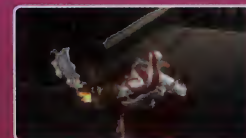
**WIPEOUT PULSE**  
DEVELOPER: SCE LIVERPOOL  
PLAYERS: 1-8

Beautiful and weighted just right, it's a futurist's wet dream. There's a reason *Wipeout* just works - and this is proof. Depending on which day of the week you ask us this just pips the likes of *Burnout Legends* and *Gran Turismo* for best racing game on PSP.



**METAL GEAR SOLID: PEACE WALKER**  
DEVELOPER: KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS  
PLAYERS: 1-6

Polished, well-produced and thought-out, this is a must-have if you own a PSP. The story's great and the action is totally addictive. Buy this game - and a PSP if you must. This is a title that no gamer should miss.



**GOD OF WAR: CHAINS OF OLYMPUS**  
DEVELOPER: READY AT DAWN  
PLAYERS: 1

With fantastic graphics and tighter-than-hades gameplay being shrunk to PSP scale hasn't made this series any less epic. Honestly, if you're a fan of the series, this is a crucial part of the saga you really shouldn't miss.



**Band Hero**  
NEVERSOFT  
Robust but the over-zealous censorship grates a lot.

**RECOMMENDED The Beatles: Rock Band**  
HARMONIX  
Outstanding. This is a tribute like no other.

**RECOMMENDED DJ Hero**  
FREESTYLE GAMES  
A real surprise package, and tough to write off as a gimmick.

**RECOMMENDED Green Day: Rock Band**  
HARMONIX  
Very good. Up there with *The Beatles: Rock Band* and *Guitar Hero: Metallica*.

**Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock**  
NEVERSOFT  
The last *GH* with a mostly decent soundtrack.

**Guitar Hero World Tour**  
NEVERSOFT  
Good, but missing crucial elements that make *Rock Band* better.

**Guitar Hero 5**  
NEVERSOFT  
Improving, but the tracklist is clearly half paid for by record suits.

**Guitar Hero: Aerosmith**  
NEVERSOFT  
Dated and weak compared to the likes of *Guitar Hero: Metallica*.

**RECOMMENDED Guitar Hero: Metallica**  
NEVERSOFT  
The best *Guitar Hero* game since *Guitar Hero III*. Super fun.

**Guitar Hero: Greatest Hits**  
BEENOX  
Great past *GH* tracks with full band support. Seriously though, why wasn't it just DLC?

**Guitar Hero: Van Halen**  
UNDERGROUND DEVELOPMENT  
Only buy this cheap: \$90 is an insult. USA *GH5* buyers got it as a free bonus.

**Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock**  
NEVERSOFT  
Functional, but it just isn't evolving at the same rate as its peers.

**LEGO Rock Band**  
HARMONIX/TRAVELLER'S TALES  
Cute. Fewer tracks than we'd like but you can export the lot.

**RECOMMENDED Rock Band**  
HARMONIX  
The best party game ever, until *Rock Band 2*.

**ESSENTIAL Rock Band 2**  
HARMONIX  
The best music game around despite MTV's poor treatment of us.

**SingStar**  
SCE LONDON STUDIO  
Will last as long as the PS3. Have you seen the DLC?

## PARTY

**EyePet**  
SCE LONDON STUDIO  
Harmless but pointless for adults; kids are the only ones for this.

**Hail to the Chimp**  
WIDELOAD GAMES  
Not funny, or enjoyable. Want to lose friends? Play this with them.

**Kung Fu Rider**  
JAPAN STUDIO  
Waggle-based bullshit. A terrible example of a Move game.

**Scene It? Bright Lights! Big Screen!**  
A2M  
Woefully vanilla compared to the past Xbox 360 versions.

**RECOMMENDED Sports Champions**  
ZINDAGI GAMES  
Despite a few quirks this is the must-have Move title.

**Start the Party!**  
SUPERMASSIVE GAMES  
Great to keep the rugrats amused for a while.

## PUZZLE/PLATFORMER

**RECOMMENDED Katamari Forever**  
NAMCO BANDAI  
Joyfulness, digitally realised. Infectious.

**LittleBigPlanet**  
MEDIA MOLECULE  
Innovative and never-ending. It's time to hit the sack!

## RACING

**Baja: Edge of Control**  
2XL GAMES  
A little bland but brilliant handling and sound.

**Blur**  
BIZARRE CREATIONS  
A race to power-ups rather than a racer with power-ups.

**RECOMMENDED Burnout Paradise**  
CRITERION GAMES  
Stunning and sharp but we miss the dedicated Crash Mode.

**RECOMMENDED Colin McRae: DiRT**  
CODEMASTERS  
Plenty of real rally action, unlike its sequel.

**Colin McRae: DiRT 2**  
CODEMASTERS  
Flashy and drives fine but it's style over substance here.

**Ferrari Challenge**  
EUTECHNYX  
Serious and robust but it won't trouble *Gran Turismo 5*.



**F1 2010**  
DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS PLAYERS: 1-12  
"The best pure racing game we've played in many, many years. The presentation is spot-on, the weather effects are stunning and the racing is frantic and realistic. Want a racing game that will send your knuckles white? This is it. Acquire immediately."

**Fuel**  
ASOBO STUDIOS  
Huge, but bugged, boring and undercooked.

**Full Auto 2: Battlelines**  
PSEUDO INTERACTIVE  
Fun but shallow. You'd take *Split/Second* instead these days.

**Gran Turismo 5 Prologue**  
POLYPHONY DIGITAL  
An appetising taster but not the full course.

**Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights**  
JUICE GAMES  
Stout mechanics, glossy options. Not too deep though.

**Midnight Club: Los Angeles**  
ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO  
Visually weak at times. Great customisation and seamless racing.

**RECOMMENDED ModNation Racers**  
UNITED FRONT GAMES  
An incredible package. Creating is even more fun than racing.

**MotoGP 09/10**  
MONUMENTAL GAMES  
Simulation freaks will want to veer well away.

## Coming 'round the mountain



**RECOMMENDED MotorStorm**  
EVOLUTION STUDIOS  
Fast, hard and dirty. In 2007 it was everything game should be. Things have come on a bit since then though.

**MotorStorm: Pacific Rift**  
EVOLUTION STUDIOS  
Boasts splitscreen but visually it hasn't come on far enough.

**MX vs. ATV: Untamed**  
RAINBOW STUDIOS  
Feels like a PS2 port with no next gen goodness.

**MX vs. ATV Reflex**  
RAINBOW STUDIOS  
Motocross freaks will love it. Needed a little more zest though.

**Need for Speed: Carbon**  
EA BLACK BOX  
A bit more Paul Walker than Vin Diesel, but solid.

**RECOMMENDED Need for Speed: SHIFT**  
SLIGHTLY MAD STUDIOS  
Superbly presented and a blast to play. Feels fast.

**Need for Speed: Undercover**  
EA BLACK BOX  
Technically faulty, and adds nothing good since *Most Wanted*.

**RECOMMENDED Pure**  
BLACK ROCK STUDIOS  
Still one of the best arcade racers on the market.

**RECOMMENDED Race Driver: GRID**  
CODEMASTERS  
A born-to-rage racing rebel. Good, but lacks the *Race Driver* vintage, despite the name. *V8 Supercars 4* this is not.

**SBK-X: Superbike World Championship**  
MILESTONE  
Inches in front of *MotoGP 09/10*. Purists may still hate on it.

**Sega Rally**  
SEGA RACING STUDIO  
Familiar, old-school arcade fun.

**Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing**  
SUMO DIGITAL  
Fun but shallow. Copies from the best but missing crucial spark.

**RECOMMENDED Split/Second**  
BLACK ROCK STUDIO  
Doesn't feel as sharp as *Burnout* but it's a true challenger.

**Stuntman: Ignition**  
PARADIGM ENTERTAINMENT  
The vehicular equivalent of a 10-hour long orgasm.

**SuperCar Challenge**  
EUTECHNYX  
Admirable effort but feels a little bland despite the exotic cars.

**Superstars V8: Next Challenge**  
MILESTONE  
An improvement but it's still more shallow than *It thinks it is*.

**RECOMMENDED WRC**  
MILESTONE  
Drab graphics, imperfect sound, but a joyfully robust driving model.

The Holden Racing team may have been beaten to the top of the podium at this year's Bathurst 1000, but it can conquer some *ModNation* mountains with this cool kart (decked out in the HRT 20th anniversary livery) by *ModNation Racers* user corey4627. Nice one!

## RPG/ACTION RPG

**Alpha Protocol**  
OBSIDIAN ENTERTAINMENT  
Great concept, poor execution. Also? Worst male lead ever.

**Cross Edge**  
COMPILE HEART  
Every benchmark of excellence has been missed. Offensive.

**RECOMMENDED Dragon Age: Origins**  
BIOWARE  
As long as it is enthralling. Essential for patient fantasy freaks.

**ESSENTIAL The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion**  
BETHESDA GAME STUDIOS  
Simply put: awesome.



**FALLOUT 3**  
DEVELOPER: BETHESDA PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS PLAYERS: 1  
"Taking the solid base of *Oblivion* and placing it into a post-apocalyptic wasteland always sounded like a great idea - and *Fallout 3* proves that concept brilliantly. This is a game that will astound you with the sheer depth of its incredible vision."

**RECOMMENDED Final Fantasy XIII**  
SQUARE ENIX  
Spellbinding graphics and 50+ hours of action.

**Marvel: Ultimate Alliance**  
RAVEN SOFTWARE  
Colourful, action-packed, co-op dungeon crawling.

**Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2**  
VICARIOUS VISIONS  
A compelling romp but the button-mashing play needs updating.

**Nier**  
CAVIA UNRELEASED  
Decent enough, but there are richer experiences elsewhere.

**Resonance of Fate**  
TRI-ACE  
Deep, but also wordy, clunky and ugly.

**Sacred 2: Fallen Angel**  
ASCARON ENTERTAINMENT  
Gigantic, but feels very slapped together.

**Valkyria Chronicles**  
SEGA WDW  
Strategy and RPG heads alike should not miss this game.

**White Knight Chronicles**  
LEVEL-5/SCE JAPAN STUDIO  
Doesn't feel like a worthwhile way to spend 30-or-so hours.



## SHOOTER

**RECOMMENDED** *Aliens vs. Predator* 9  
REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS  
One of the best movie-inspired titles ever. Beyond brutal.

**RECOMMENDED** *Battlefield: Bad Company* 8  
DIGITAL ILLUSIONS CE  
Destructible environments and humour. Together at last.

**RECOMMENDED** *Battlefield: Bad Company 2* 8  
DIGITAL ILLUSIONS CE  
A top-tier shooter but the single-player mischief is M.I.A.

**RECOMMENDED** *BioShock* 8  
IRRATIONAL GAMES / 2K MARIN  
14 months too late, but this is grown-up gaming at its best.

**RECOMMENDED** *BioShock 2* 9  
2K MARIN / DIGITAL EXTREMES / 2K AUSTRALIA  
Doesn't match the original's plot.

*BlackSite: Area 51* 5  
MIDWAY STUDIOS AUSTIN  
A pedestrian shooter that needed more time in the lab.

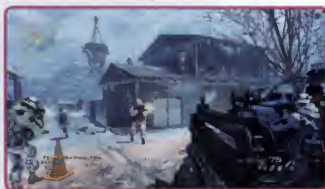


**BORDERLANDS** 9  
DEVELOPER: GEARBOX SOFTWARE  
PUBLISHER: 2K PLAYERS: 1-4  
"Borderlands starts out great and only gets better. It takes the best elements from RPGs and fuses them to a superb shooter. The result is quite simply the most rewarding co-op to date. The fact it's being supported by so much extra DLC, even this long after release, means it's great value for money too."

**RECOMMENDED** *Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway* 8  
GEARBOX SOFTWARE  
The most authentic WWII shooter ever made.

*Call of Duty 3* 7  
TREYARCH  
Solid but surprisingly unspectacular.

**ESSENTIAL** *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare* 10  
INFINITY WARD  
Relentlessly exciting. You'd have to be mental to miss this.



**MODERN WARFARE 2** 10  
DEVELOPER: INFINITY WARD  
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION PLAYERS: 1-18  
"It's almost like three games in one, stuffed with moments that will leave you shocked and breathless with excitement. Supremely crafted, *Modern Warfare 2* is, with its older brother, a high-watermark for this generation of shooters."

**ESSENTIAL** *Call of Duty: World at War* 10  
TREYARCH  
A class act. War at its worst (and best). Proof you can make a great WWII game set (partially) in the Pacific. Plus, Nazi Zombies.

*Call of Juarez: Bound in Blood* 7  
TECHLAND  
A cinematic and action-packed Western shooter.

**RECOMMENDED** *The Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena* 8  
STARBREEZE STUDIOS / TIGON STUDIOS  
Moody and fresh. A must play. You don't need to know the movies to enjoy it either.

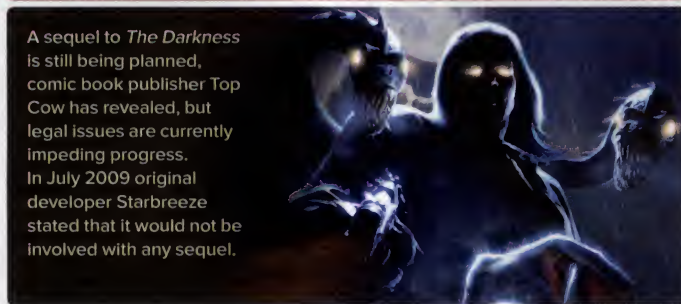
*Condemned 2: Bloodshot* 9  
MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS  
Gripping stuff. We were blown away. Shame the original isn't on PS3.

**RECOMMENDED** *The Darkness* 9  
STARBREEZE STUDIOS  
Stunning, original and gory as hell. Cross your fingers for a sequel because this rocks.

*F.E.A.R.* 8  
MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS / DAY 1 STUDIOS  
A chilling ride, but the graphics could've been sharper.

### A light in the dark

A sequel to *The Darkness* is still being planned, comic book publisher Top Cow has revealed, but legal issues are currently impeding progress. In July 2009 original developer Starbreeze stated that it would not be involved with any sequel.



*F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin* 7  
MONOLITH PRODUCTIONS  
An above-average shooter suffering from a lack of imagination.

**RECOMMENDED** *Far Cry 2* 8  
UBISOFT MONTREAL  
A technical open-world bell-ringer but the travel time will grate.

*Haze* 6  
FREE RADICAL DESIGN  
A flop. Patchy visuals, apostate level design and dismal AI.

**ESSENTIAL** *Killzone 2* 10  
GUERRILLA GAMES  
Lives up to the hype. Amazing graphics, hectic action.

*Legendary* 4  
SPARK UNLIMITED  
A rushed mess. Terrible.

**RECOMMENDED** *MAG* 9  
ZIPPER INTERACTIVE  
Shooter junkies take heed: this is where it's at for online combat.

**RECOMMENDED** *Medal of Honor* 8  
DANGER CLOSE / DIGITAL ILLUSIONS CE  
Not sexy but it's a gritty, realistic shooter with great atmosphere.

*Medal of Honor: Airborne* 6  
EA LOS ANGELES  
Short and lacks much true innovation. Too many problems.

**RECOMMENDED** *Mirror's Edge* 8  
EA DIGITAL ILLUSIONS CE  
A true original that makes some grand leaps in design.

*Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising* 8  
CODEMASTERS  
Authentic but niche. Very unforgiving.

**RECOMMENDED** *The Orange Box* 9  
EA UK / VALVE CORPORATION  
*Portal* is worth virtually any asking price alone.

*Quantum of Solace* 7  
TREYARCH  
Nearly there but has a few too many faults to get over the line.

**RECOMMENDED** *Resistance: Fall of Man* 10  
INSOMNIAC GAMES  
A truly fantastic launch title with the best weapons around.

**RECOMMENDED** *Resistance 2* 9  
INSOMNIAC GAMES  
Fast, furious and stuffed with action.

*Rogue Warrior* 3  
ZOMBIE STUDIOS / REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS  
A fiasco. We tried to like it but it's too short and too terrible.

*Singularity* 7  
RAVEN SOFTWARE  
Had potential but wasn't quite worth the wait.

*Soldier of Fortune: Payback* 6  
CAULDRON HQ  
Serviceable, we guess, but the gore has been cut out for us.

*Time Crisis 4* 7  
NEX ENTERTAINMENT  
A solid attempt that doesn't quite reach 88 miles per hour.

*TimeShift* 6  
SABER INTERACTIVE  
A solid attempt that doesn't quite reach 88 miles per hour.

**RECOMMENDED** *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas* 9  
UBISOFT MONTREAL  
Slick, good-looking and utterly engaging. Smart shooting.

*Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas 2* 7  
UBISOFT MONTREAL  
Doesn't quite feel as good or as cool as the first one.

*Turning Point: Fall of Liberty* 4  
SPARK UNLIMITED  
Suisse from start to finish. Great concept, bogus execution.

*Turok* 7  
PROPAGANDA GAMES  
The new *Turok* packs bite but it's missing a few teeth.

*Unreal Tournament 3* 8  
EPIC GAMES  
Fast, twitchy online multiplayer shooting. No splitscreen though.

*Wolfenstein* 7  
RAVEN SOFTWARE / ID SOFTWARE  
Lacks soul but delivers Nazi-blasting action.

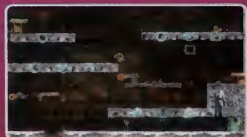
## SPORTS

*2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa* 7  
EA CANADA  
Blissful, *FIFA 10* football with a World Cup facelift. A bit pricey.

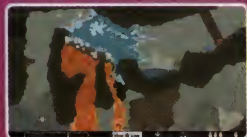
*Ashes Cricket 2009* 6  
TRANSMISSION GAMES  
Disappointing, but stick through the ugly for some multiplayer beauty.



## THE BEST PSN GAMES ON PlayStation®Store



**BRAID**  
DEVELOPER: HOTHEAD  
PLAYERS: 1  
A charming platformer that incorporates one of last decade's most used mechanics – time manipulation – whilst wrapped up in gorgeous graphics. Incredibly addictive and charming, it's made even better when you discover it was all made by one man.



**PIXELJUNK SHOOTER**  
DEVELOPER: Q-GAMES  
PLAYERS: 1-2  
Take control of a tiny ship and navigate your way through various caverns, rescuing any survivors along the way. Of course, there's interesting gameplay mechanics thrown into the mix, such as fluid water and lava dynamics that need to be used to solve puzzles.



**FLIGHT CONTROL HD**  
DEVELOPER: FIREMINT  
PLAYERS: 1-4  
Possibly the most addictive and accessible PSN title available. The premise is simply to guide the aircraft on-screen to their respective runways. That's it – but you'll be totally hooked. One of the best games to play with PlayStation Move too.



**SHANK**  
DEVELOPER: KLEI ENTERTAINMENT  
SAN DIEGO PLAYERS: 1-2  
An ultra-violent 2D side-scroller inspired by the classic beat 'em ups of the '80s. Aesthetically it's a beautifully animated homage to the greatest graphic novels and golden-age comics. Stuffed with guns and machetes *Shank* is a cut above the rest.



**MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2**  
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM  
PLAYERS: 1-2  
It's by no means 'straight' *Street Fighter* though nor should it be. Stuffed with 56 characters this three-on-three brawler is a visual and aural explosion. The HD treatment is superbly done. If you're a fighting nut you should have this already.



## Like a tiger

The hits just keep on coming for Tiger Woods on and off the course. The US lost the Ryder Cup to the Europeans, a sex tape allegedly featuring the golfer is set to surface and recent figures from NPD Group show sales of *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11* are only 34 per cent of last year's sales after three months on the market. EA Sports president Peter Moore called the sales "disappointing" so far.



**Backbreaker** 7  
NATURALMOTION  
Great tech. Worth a look to see euphoria at work in a sports game.

**Beijing 2008** 5  
EUROCOM  
Not the worst of its type but far from a game to buy and keep.



**FIFA 11** 9  
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA  
PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-22  
"Yes, we have a deeply romantic view of *FIFA 11*. EA has rounded the edges and made a representation of the world game that rings true. While the hundreds of matches ahead may eventually bring this titan back to Earth with another wish-list of changes for *FIFA 12*, at the moment *FIFA 11* remains a bafflingly brilliant update. If you've skipped the last few *FIFA* updates boost the score by one. Seriously, it's that good. Essential."

**RECOMMENDED Fight Night Round 4** 9  
EA CANADA  
Runs like a dream. Technical and strategic, plus it looks absolutely brilliant.

**RECOMMENDED NBA 2K10** 8  
VISUAL CONCEPTS / KUSH GAMES  
Excellent, broadcast-level presentation. The *FIFA 10* of basketball.

**NBA Live 10** 8  
EA CANADA  
Nearly as good as *NBA 2K10* but you don't need them both.

**NBA Street: Homecourt** 8  
EA CANADA  
Brash, addictive arcade basketball. Instant fun.

**Pro Evolution Soccer 2011** 8  
KONAMI  
Perfect for quick goal fix, still second best overall.

**Rugby League Live** 5  
BIG ANT  
Not as complete a game as the last one on PS2 and the whack team ratings seem to point to a general indifference about the NRL from the developer.

**Shaun White Snowboarding** 6  
UBISOFT MONTREAL  
Lacks the fine touch of realism or the excitement of lunacy.

**RECOMMENDED Skate** 9  
EA BLACK BOX  
A well-balanced masterpiece and true *Tony Hawk* killer. Trumped by the sequel but a brilliant game.



**SKATE 2** 9  
DEVELOPER: BLACK BOX  
PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-8  
"Despite some frame rate issues *Skate 2* is one of the greatest sports games ever conceived. The controls are flawless, the city is dense and packed with natural lines and the balance is sublime."

**RECOMMENDED Skate 3** 8  
EA BLACK BOX  
Better in many ways, although the city isn't as cool as *Skate 2*.

**Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09** 8  
EA TIBURON  
Still the only golf game worth owning.

**Tony Hawk's Project 8** 7  
NEVERSOFT  
No real reason to revisit this post-*Skate* at all.

**Tony Hawk's Proving Ground** 6  
NEVERSOFT  
Bloated and inconsistent. Pass.

**Tony Hawk: RIDE** 4  
ROBOMODO  
Pure frustration made plastic. Sub-par game, ludicrous price.

**Top Spin 3** 8  
PAM DEVELOPMENT  
Realistic tennis with a steep learning curve.

**UFC 2009 Undisputed** 8  
YUKE'S  
A technical, rewarding fighter that looks bloody unreal.

**RECOMMENDED UFC Undisputed 2010** 8  
YUKE'S  
The new undisputed baron of sports fighting.

**Vancouver 2010** 6  
EUROCOM  
A handful of events that last one afternoon.

**RECOMMENDED Virtua Tennis 2009** 8  
SUMO DIGITAL  
The top seed of tennis made even better.

## STRATEGY

**RECOMMENDED Civilization Revolution** 8  
FIRAXIS GAMES  
Great fun and shockingly addictive.

**RECOMMENDED R.U.S.E.** 8  
EUGEN SYSTEMS  
Niche but supremely well-crafted strategy.

**Stormrise** 4  
THE CREATIVE ASSEMBLY  
A cack-handed, future war mess.

**Tom Clancy's EndWar** 7  
UBISOFT SHANGHAI  
The console RTS is here but it's far from a finished product.

## infamous

REVISITING PLAYSTATION CLASSICS

## 1999: RIDGE RACER TYPE 4



CONSOLE: PLAYSTATION GENRE: RACING DEVELOPER: NAMCO COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: JAPAN CURRENT APPROXIMATE PRICE: \$20 (EBAY)



This, ladies and gentlemen, is the most playable *Ridge Racer* ever made. Like a diamond in sunshine it dazzles no matter which way you look at it.

A new *Ridge Racer* every year used to be the big annual update, something many PlayStation owners bought. The game and console complimented each other like apple pie and ice cream. It just happened, despite the games' flaws.

*Ridge Racer Type 4* represented a paradigm shift, bringing a tangible and malleable story into your racing career to create a CarPG of sorts. Four teams vied for your attention, some more confident than others but all going for glory. You, the driver, were never physically seen and the story of your success – or, rather, the effect your success had on the team's owners – was told in still frames rather than FMV or proper animation. It meant that the action, the fluidity, the life, was constructed by your racing.

This success and failure directly impacted on your team acquiring new cars. Consistently scrape through the qualifier of each race and you'd end up with the lowest-specced machine for the next lot of races, and a sad, sad face and story from your team boss. Perform beyond their expectations and you'd be praised and rewarded; there hasn't been a game that's attempted to do anything else like it. Money and points rule in the 21st Century.

A decade ago this was incredible



stuff, and the production values are the game's swansong. Beautifully smooth textures were backed up with an up tempo framerate, and clever motion-blurring. Stupid rules where one scrape with the barrier brought you to a grinding halt were gone from the three previous *Ridge Racer* games and so was an abusive commentator. The amount of stuff that changed between this and the last bunch of games is a leap in light year proportions compared to the modern series (we'll ignore the abysmal *R: Racing Evolution*).

Plus, it had hundreds of cars in a time where sheer numbers made a game more impressive, regardless of the arbitrary grinding required to unlock them all.

Separate it into its technical parts and for a 1999 title, next to *Gran Turismo*, this was compulsory gaming. Namco's belief in the product also bore the JogCon, an actual force-feedback controller not much bigger than a Dual Shock (see boxout). In 2010 *Ridge Racer* in general is a bit diluted; a less-than essential arcade racer against the dominating *Burnout* series. *R4*, however, remains a bonafide classic.

## JOGCON: REMEMBER THAT?

Obviously not satisfied with creating one alternative to the PlayStation controller with the NegCon, Namco made a controller with a steering wheel in the centre of it that gave force feedback. The wheel worked remarkably well, though the ergonomics of the pad were lacking. Steering with your thumb became a bit slippery but there wasn't a truly comfortable way to grip it with your thumb and finger. Ergo: obscurity, and a byline in peripheral history.



**Next month**



# ***EXCLUSIVE!*** **MORTAL KOMBAT™**

***We visit the studio and chat to creator Ed Boon!***

## **PLUS ESSENTIAL CHRISTMAS REVIEWS**

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Disclaimer: OPS will do everything to deliver this content next month but we can't be held at fault if scheduled games slip and miss our deadline. GT5? We're looking at you.





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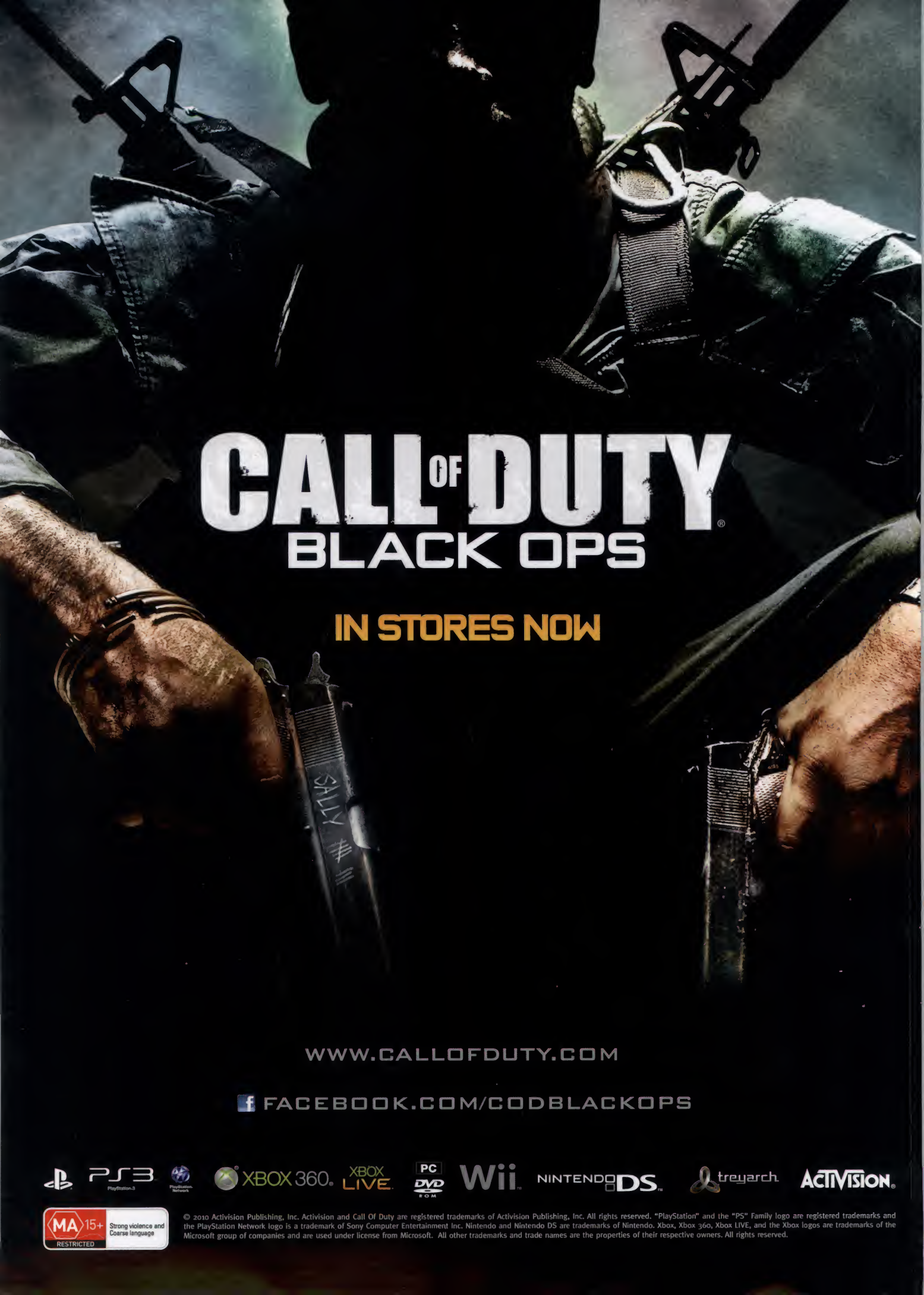
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